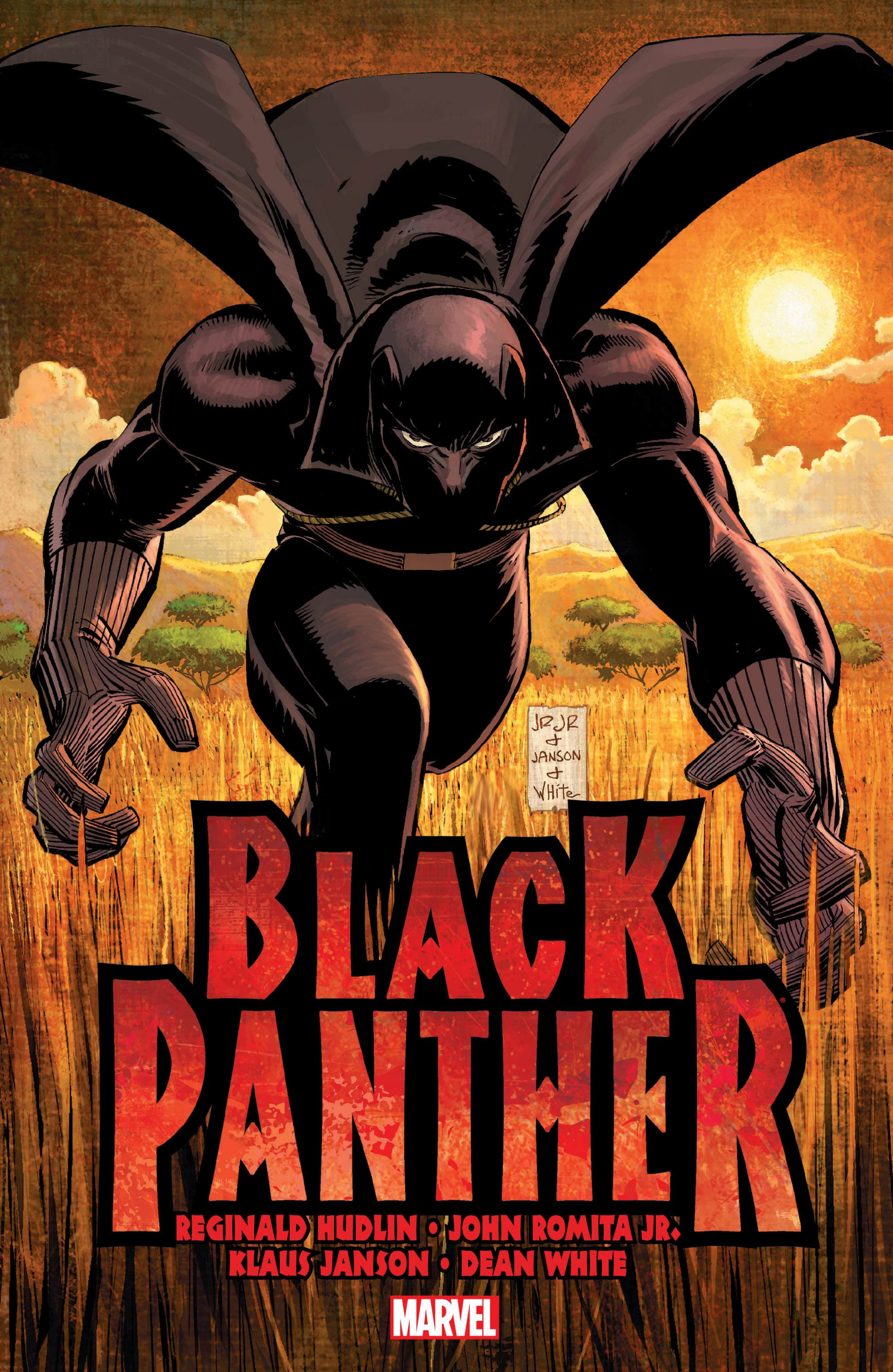




JRJR
&
JANSON
&
WHITE

BLACK PANTHER

REGINALD HUDLIN • JOHN ROMITA JR.
KLAUS JANSON • DEAN WHITE

MARVEL



BLACK PANTHER

WRITER: REGINALD HUDLIN

PENCILER: JOHN ROMITA JR.

INKER: KLAUS JANSON

COLORIST: DEAN WHITE

LETTERERS: VC's RANDY GENTILE & CHRIS ELIOPOULOS

**COVER ARTISTS: JOHN ROMITA JR., ESAD RIBIC, FRANK CHO,
JOHN CASSADAY, TERRY DODSON & KAARE ANDREWS**

ASSISTANT EDITOR: CORY SEDLMEIER

EDITOR: AXEL ALONSO

BLACK PANTHER CREATED BY STAN LEE AND JACK KIRBY

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WHO IS THE BLACK PANTHER

1



JRJR
+
JANSON
+
WHITE

WHO IS THE BLACK PANTHER?

PART ONE

WAKANDA 5TH CENTURY A.D.



STAY FOCUSED.
I'VE HEARD THAT THE
WAKANDANS ARE
FIERCE.

FIERCE? ISN'T THAT
WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT
THE LAST TRIBE?

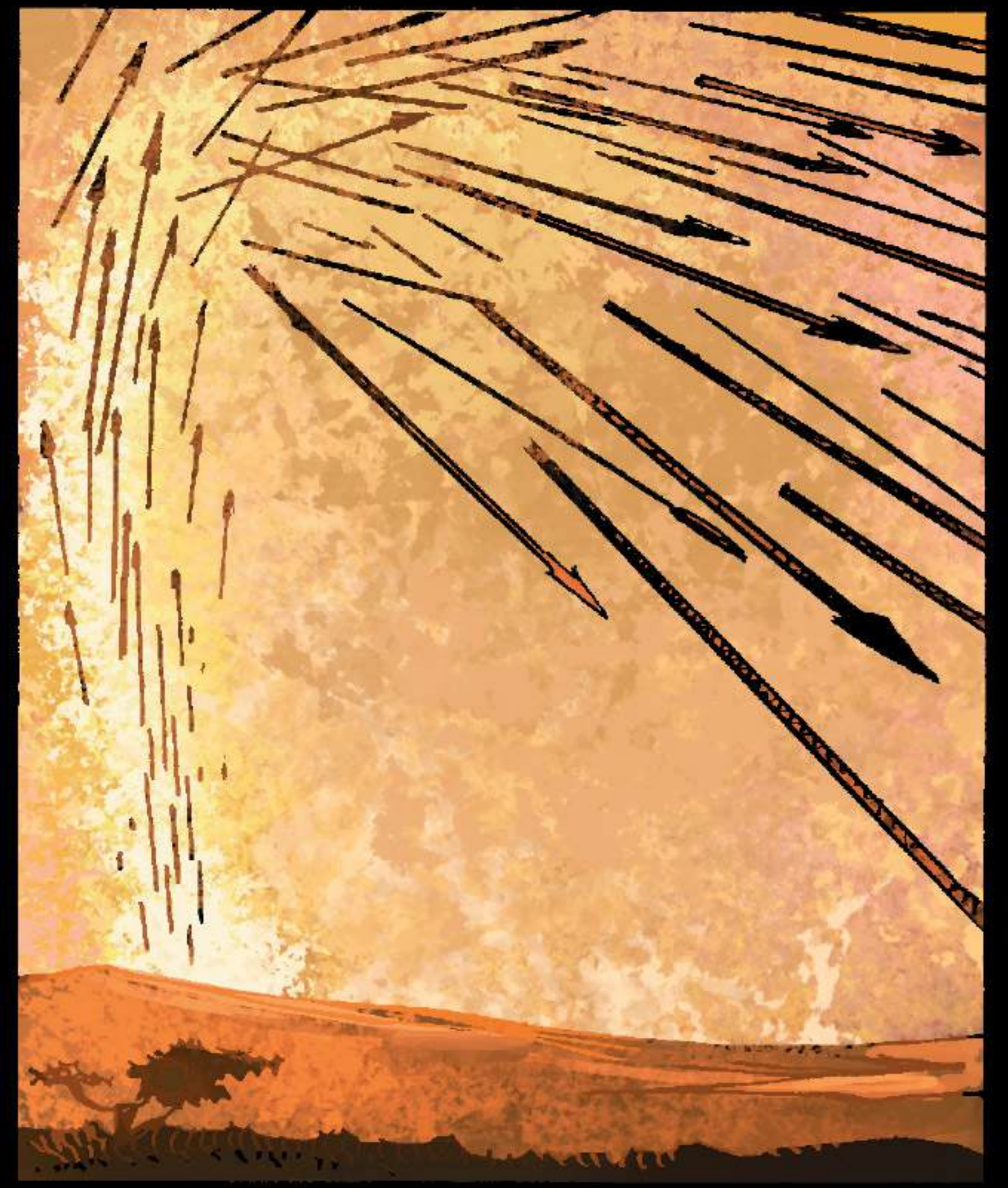
YEAH, AND
THE ONE BEFORE
THAT!

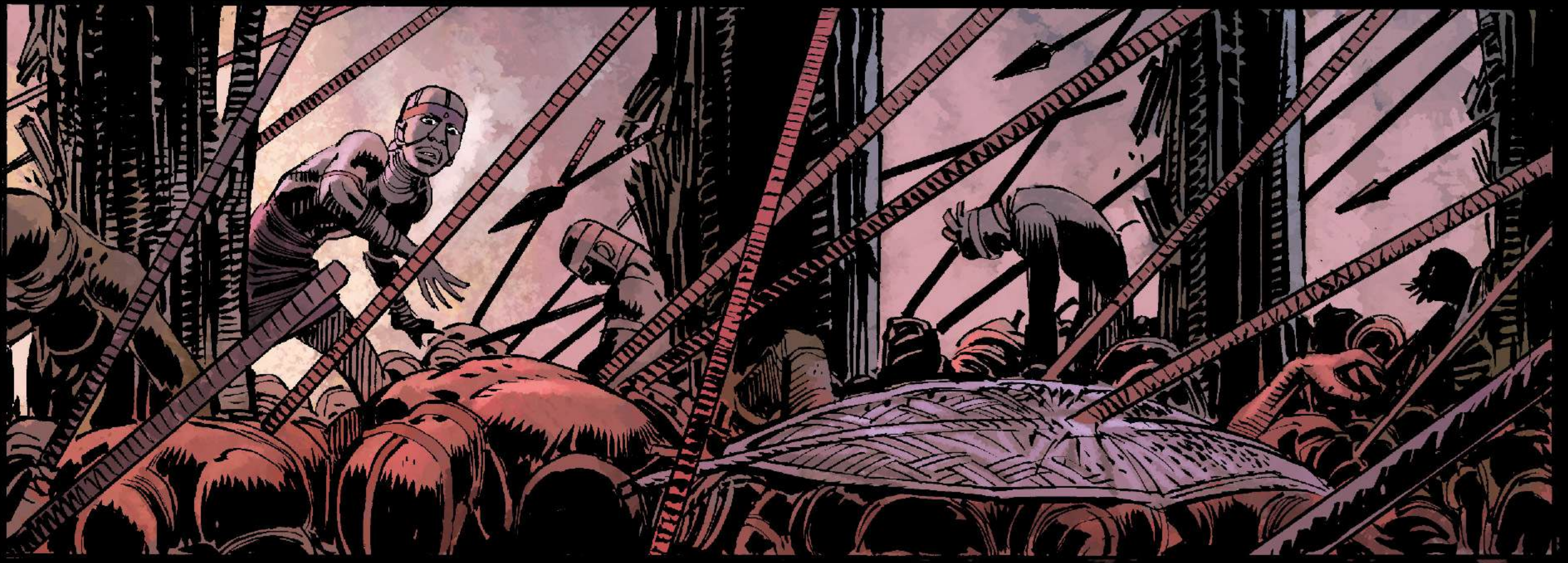
ACTUALLY, NO.
I ONLY SAID THAT
ABOUT THE
WAKANDANS.





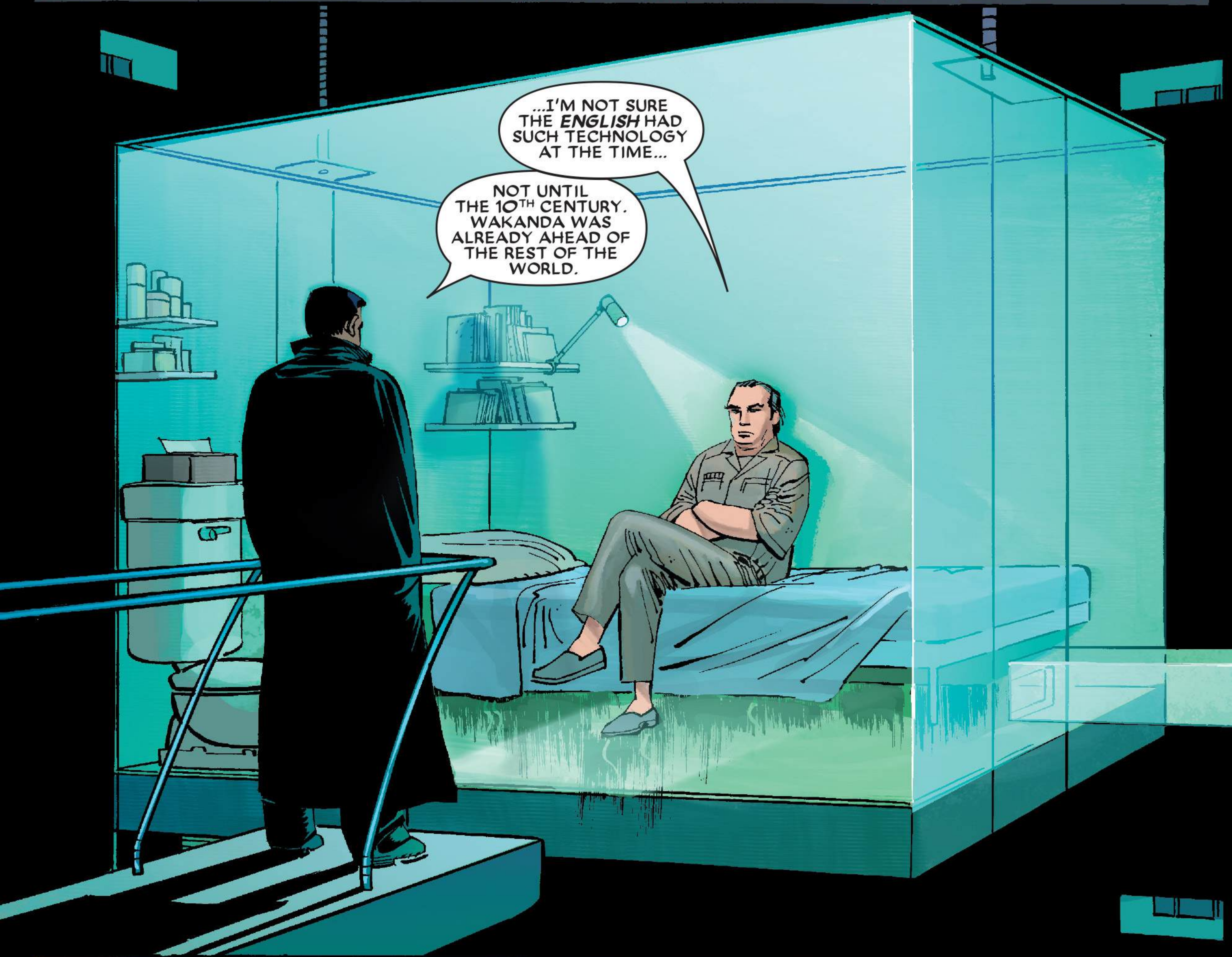








THE
WAKANDANS
HAD GIANT
CROSSBOWS?
THAT'S
AMAZING...



...I'M NOT SURE
THE *ENGLISH* HAD
SUCH TECHNOLOGY
AT THE TIME...

NOT UNTIL
THE 10TH CENTURY.
WAKANDA WAS
ALREADY AHEAD OF
THE REST OF THE
WORLD.



CLEVER
LITTLE BUGGERS.
AND TOUGH,
TOO.



OH, YOU
HAVEN'T
HEARD
ANYTHING
YET...



WAKANDA 19TH CENTURY.



SIR!
THE NATIVES
REFUSE TO GO
ANY FARTHER,
SIR!

FLOG
THEM.



UH, WE HAVE,
SIR. THEY STILL
WON'T BUDGE.

HAVE THESE
PEOPLE NO SENSE
OF INDUSTRY?

THEY'RE SCARED OF
THE WAKANDANS, SIR.
BAD JUJU, THAT SORT
OF THING.



LABOR PROBLEMS IN AFRICA-- *THAT'S* A NEW ONE!



DO YOU THINK THIS IS FUNNY? DO YOU?



I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS SUPERSTITIOUS NONSENSE. HOW THE HELL ARE WE SUPPOSED TO GET THAT BLASTED GATLING GUN IN POSITION?



THESE ARE SOME OF THE SAME BOYS WE HAD DURING THE *SOUTH AFRICAN* CAMPAIGN. THEY DID A BANG-UP JOB THERE. DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO THEM.



IF THEY DON'T GET OFF THEIR BLACK ASSES, IT'LL BE HOT LEAD--

THEY'RE RUNNING FOR IT!



TREASONOUS BASTARDS! FIRE AT WILL!





...PERHAPS, GIVEN OUR CIRCUMSTANCES, WE COULD LEAVE THE FINE CHINA BEHIND?

NO! WE WILL NOT LOSE OUR GRIP ON CIVILIZATION BECAUSE OF THOSE MONKEYS. WE WILL NOT BE DRAGGED DOWN TO THEIR LEVEL...

DON'T FAINT ON ME NOW, JENSEN...



SIR... PERHAPS AN INSPIRING WORD?



I SWEAR ON MY CHILD'S LIFE, WHEN WE GET BACK TO OUR HARD-WON BASE CAMP IN PRETORIA, EVERY KAFFIR ON OUR LAND WILL PAY FIVE TIMES OVER FOR THIS BETRAYAL!

I WILL TEACH THESE WAKANDANS THE TRUE MEANING OF FEAR!



WAKANDA...

...IT'S **EVERYTHING** THE LEGENDS SAY IT IS. WEIRD-LOOKING BUILDINGS, THOUGH. BUT I CAN SEE GOLD TRINKETS FROM HERE.

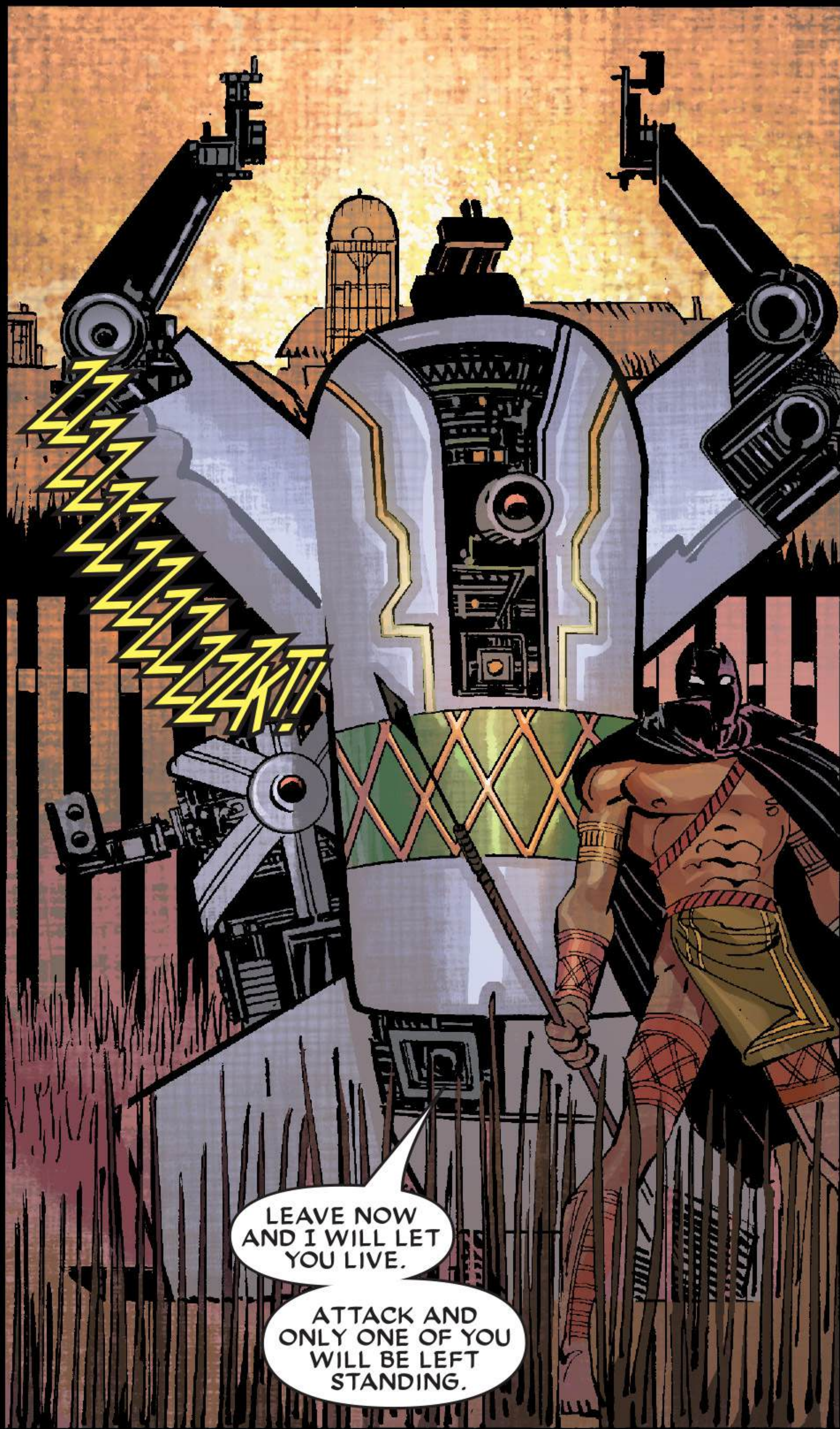


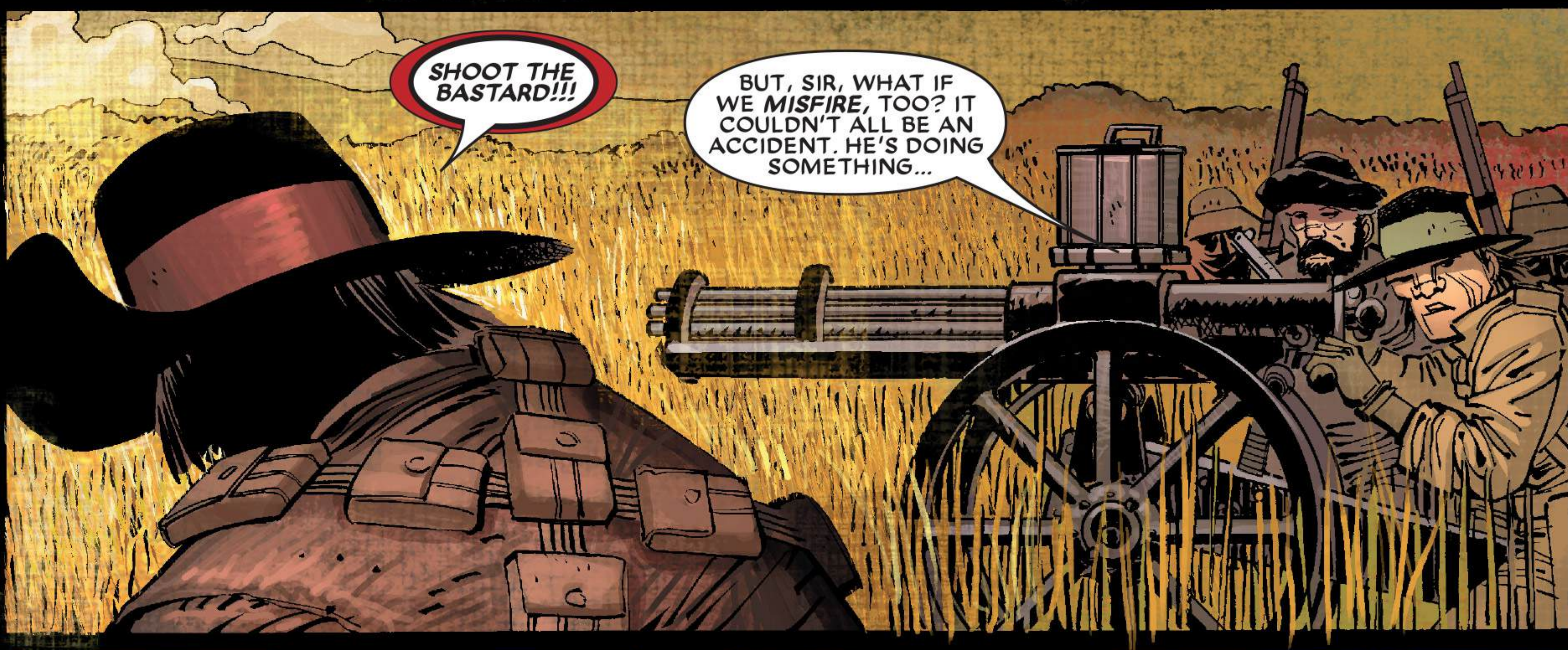
THE BOYS WILL GET THEIR FAIR SHARE OF **BOOTY** TONIGHT, FOR SURE.





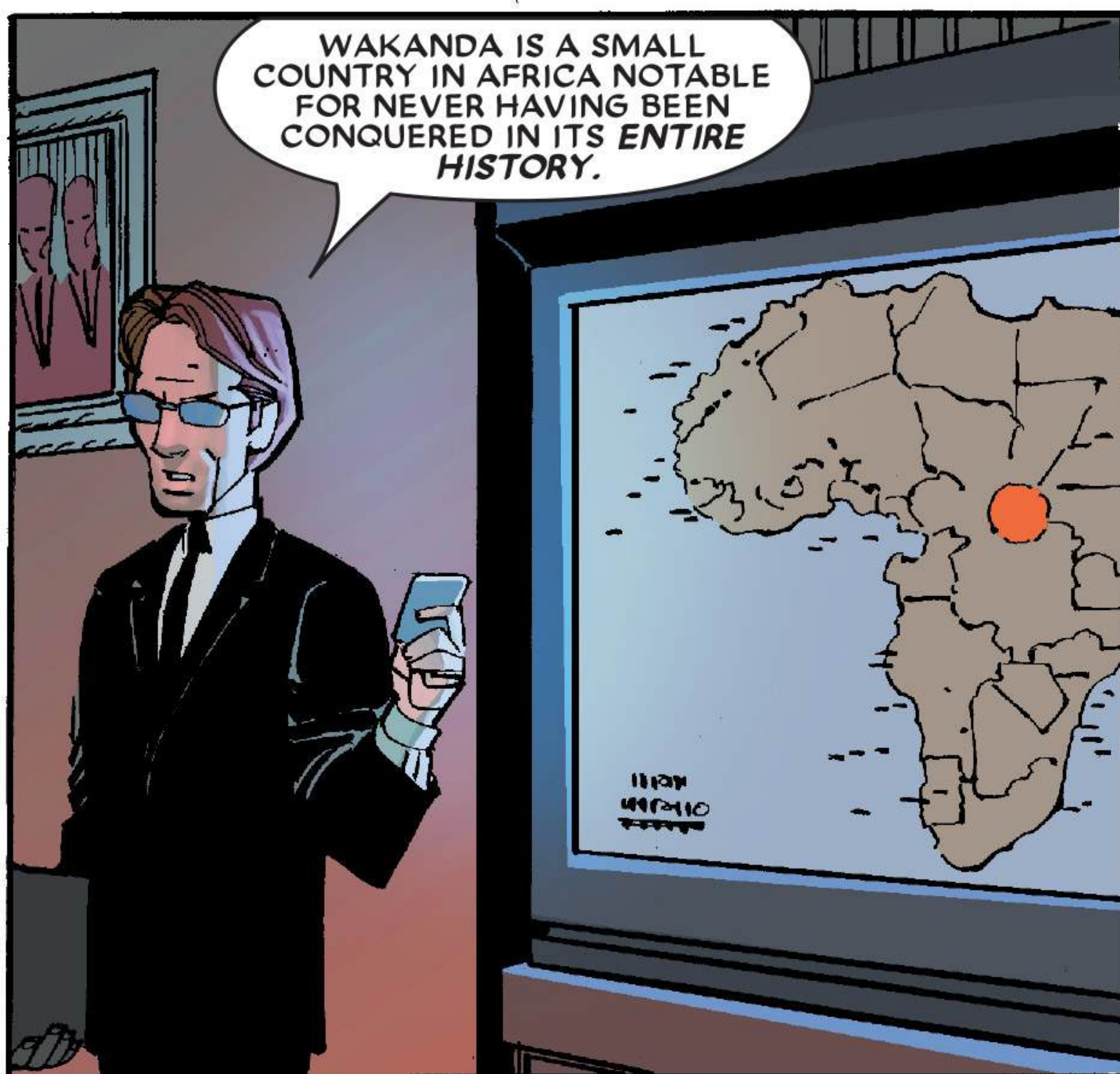


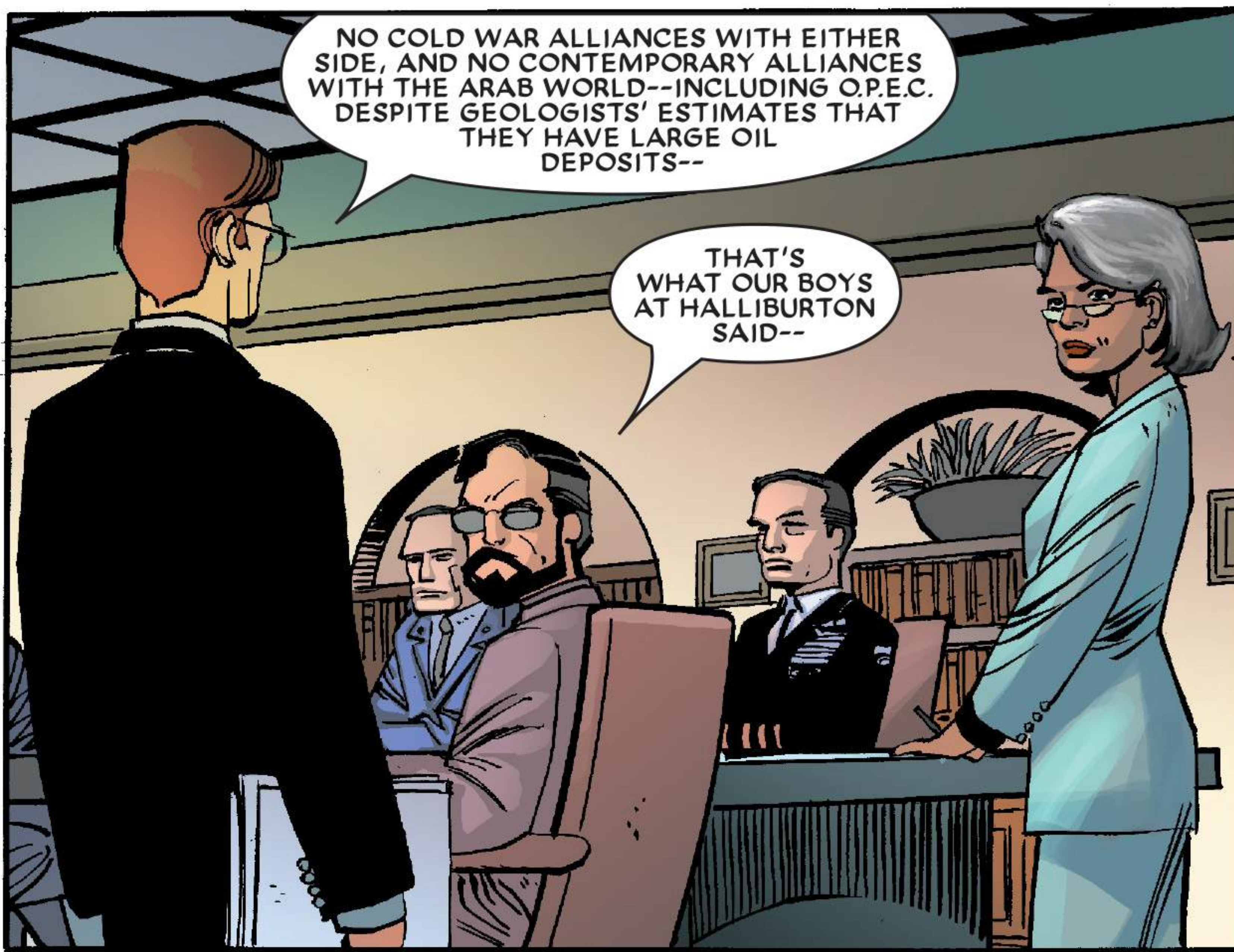










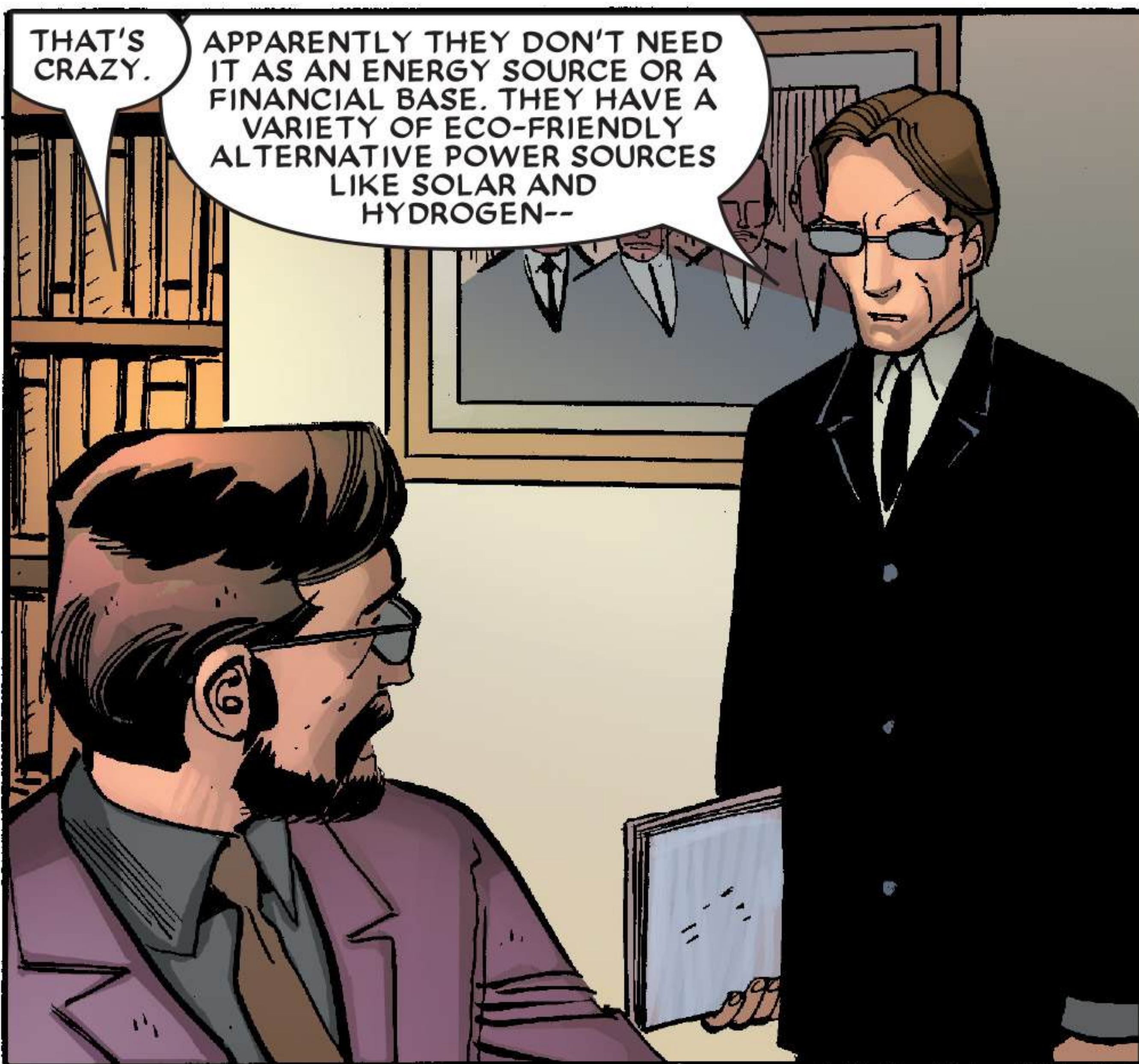


NO COLD WAR ALLIANCES WITH EITHER SIDE, AND NO CONTEMPORARY ALLIANCES WITH THE ARAB WORLD--INCLUDING O.P.E.C. DESPITE GEOLOGISTS' ESTIMATES THAT THEY HAVE LARGE OIL DEPOSITS--

THAT'S WHAT OUR BOYS AT HALLIBURTON SAID--

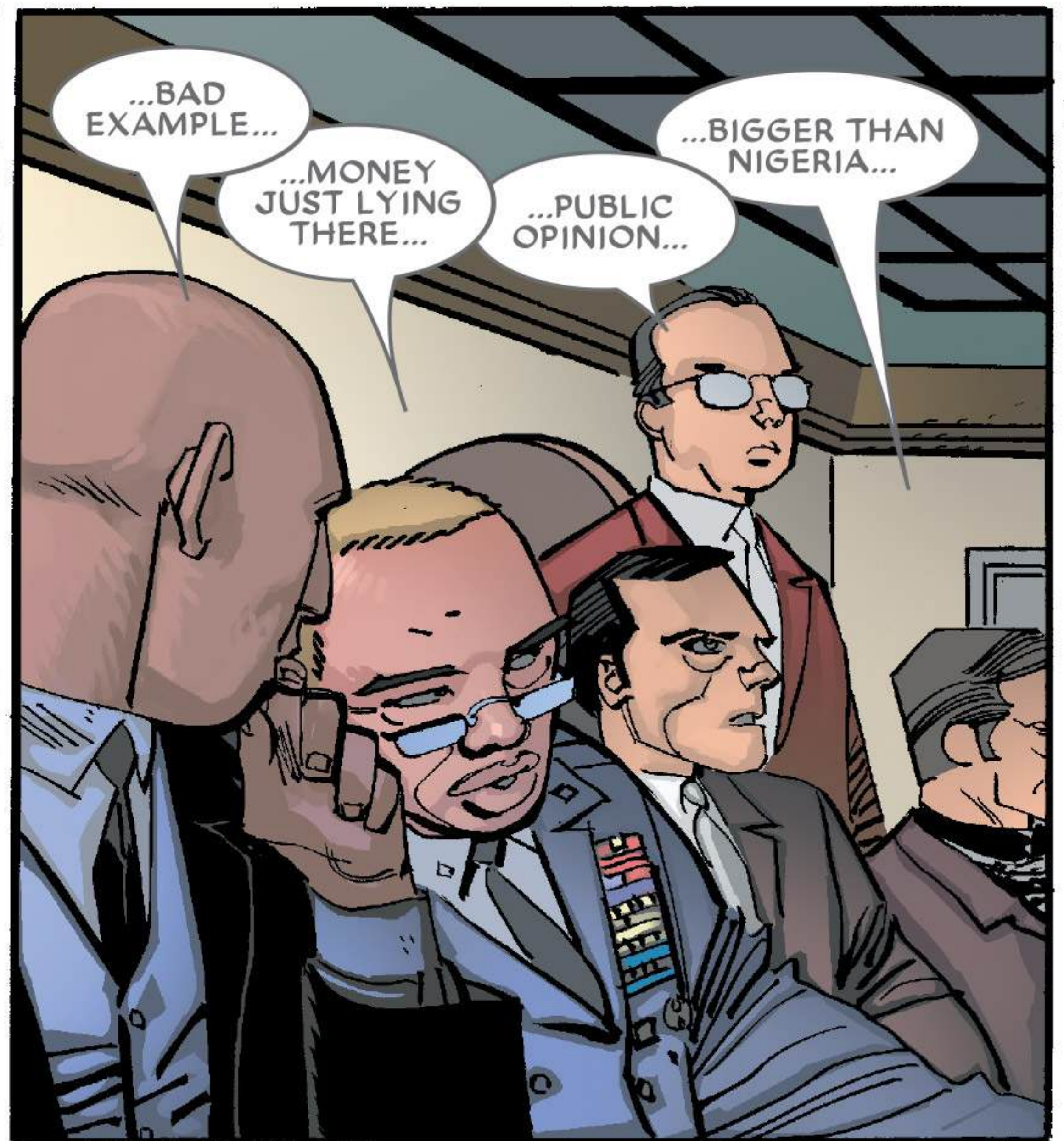


--THEY DON'T EVEN PUMP IT.



THAT'S CRAZY.

APPARENTLY THEY DON'T NEED IT AS AN ENERGY SOURCE OR A FINANCIAL BASE. THEY HAVE A VARIETY OF ECO-FRIENDLY ALTERNATIVE POWER SOURCES LIKE SOLAR AND HYDROGEN--

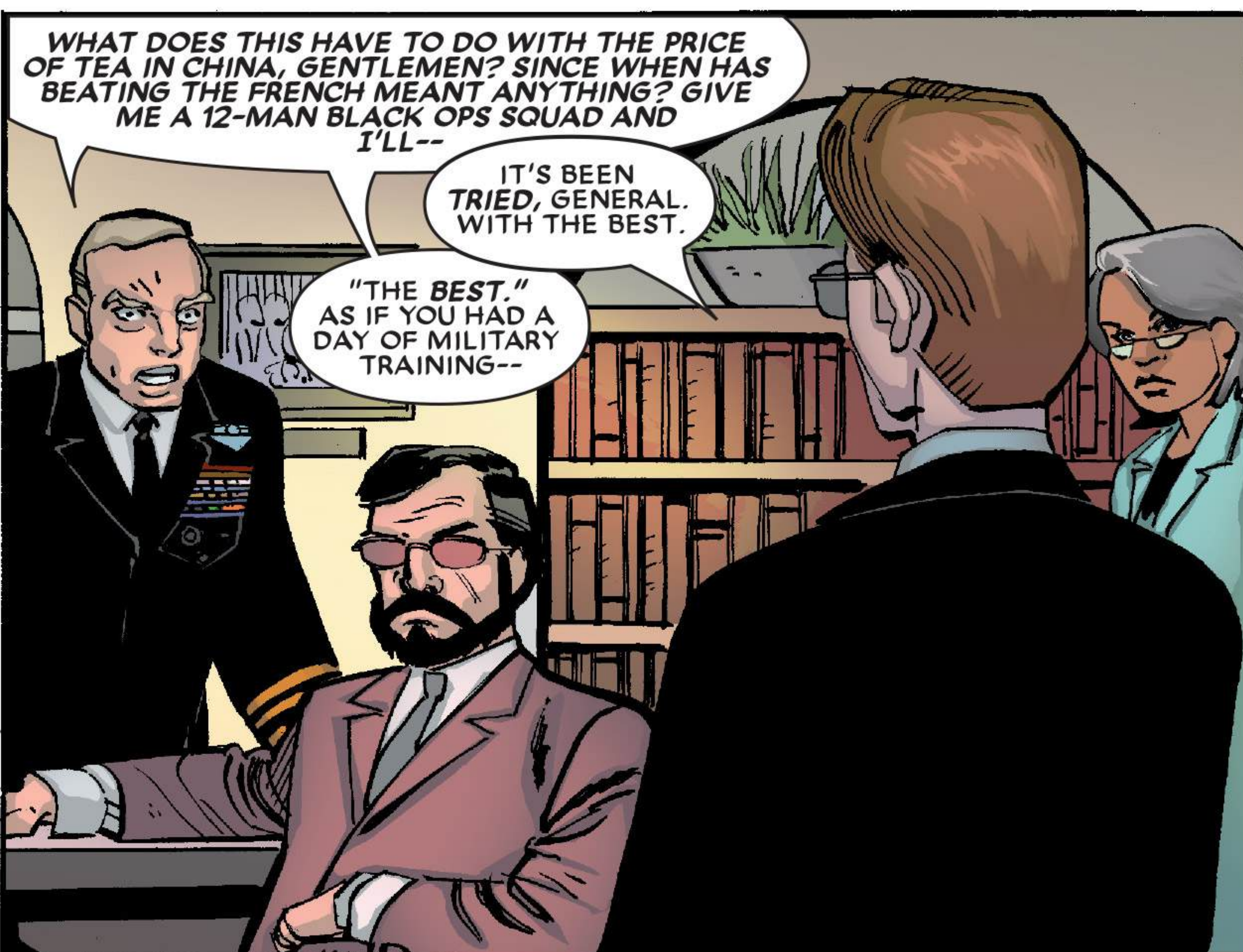


...BAD EXAMPLE...

...MONEY JUST LYING THERE...

...PUBLIC OPINION...

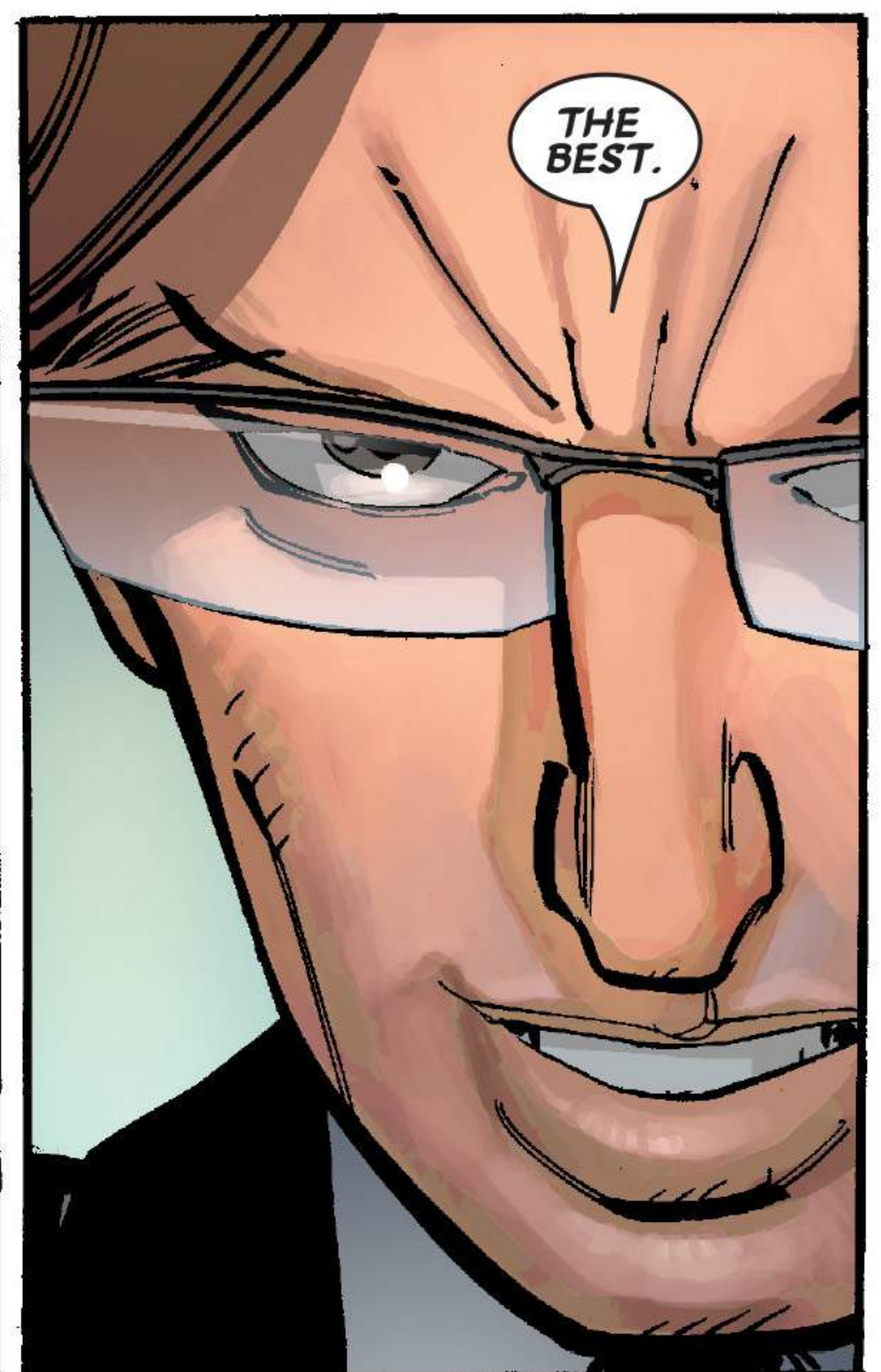
...BIGGER THAN NIGERIA...



WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH THE PRICE OF TEA IN CHINA, GENTLEMEN? SINCE WHEN HAS BEATING THE FRENCH MEANT ANYTHING? GIVE ME A 12-MAN BLACK OPS SQUAD AND I'LL--

IT'S BEEN TRIED, GENERAL. WITH THE BEST.

"THE BEST." AS IF YOU HAD A DAY OF MILITARY TRAINING--



THE BEST.

WAKANDA, 1944.



"CAPTAIN AMERICA ENTERED WAKANDA DURING WORLD WAR TWO ON A SEARCH-AND-DESTROY MISSION."

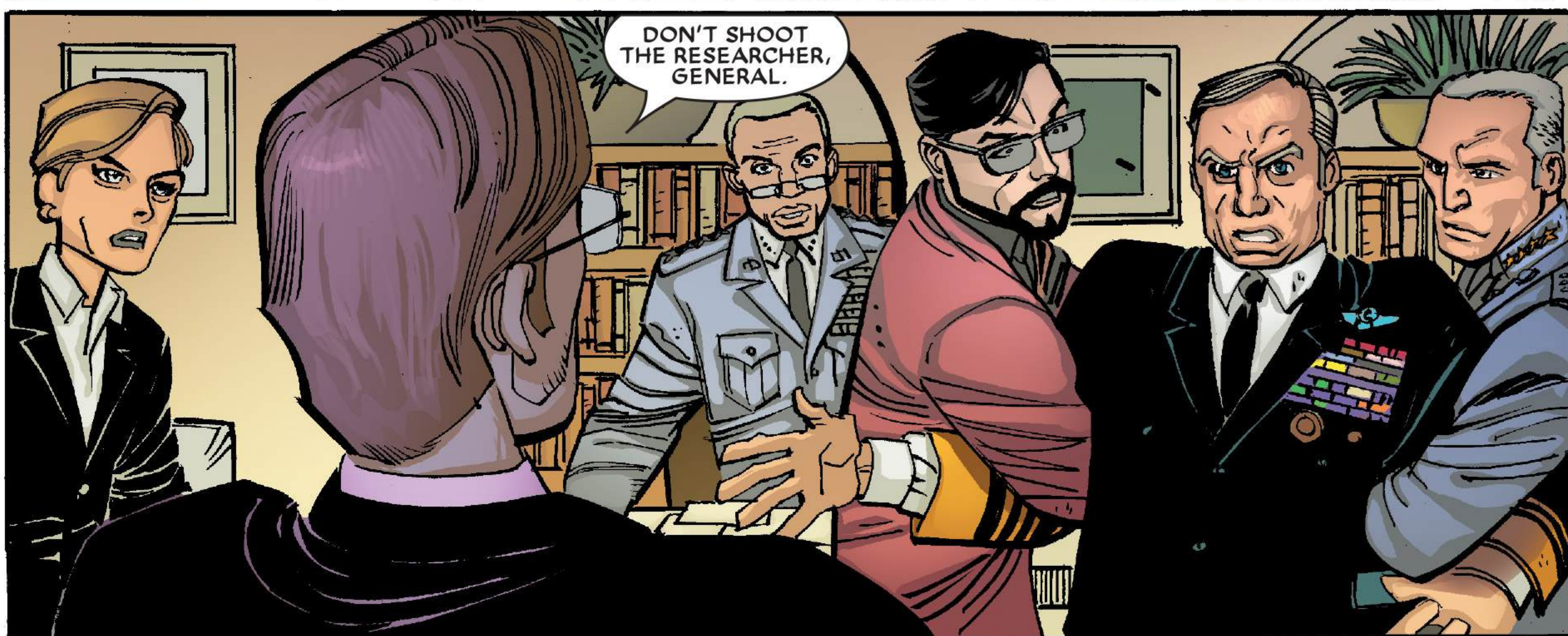
"HE WAS HUNTING NAZIS WHO WERE OUT TO EXPLOIT WAKANDAN SCIENCE."

"CAP DIDN'T KNOW THE WAKANDANS HAD ALREADY BEHEADED THE NAZIS DAYS AGO."

"HE HAD AN EXTENDED HAND-TO-HAND BATTLE WITH THE BLACK PANTHER."

"AND?"

"HE LOST."



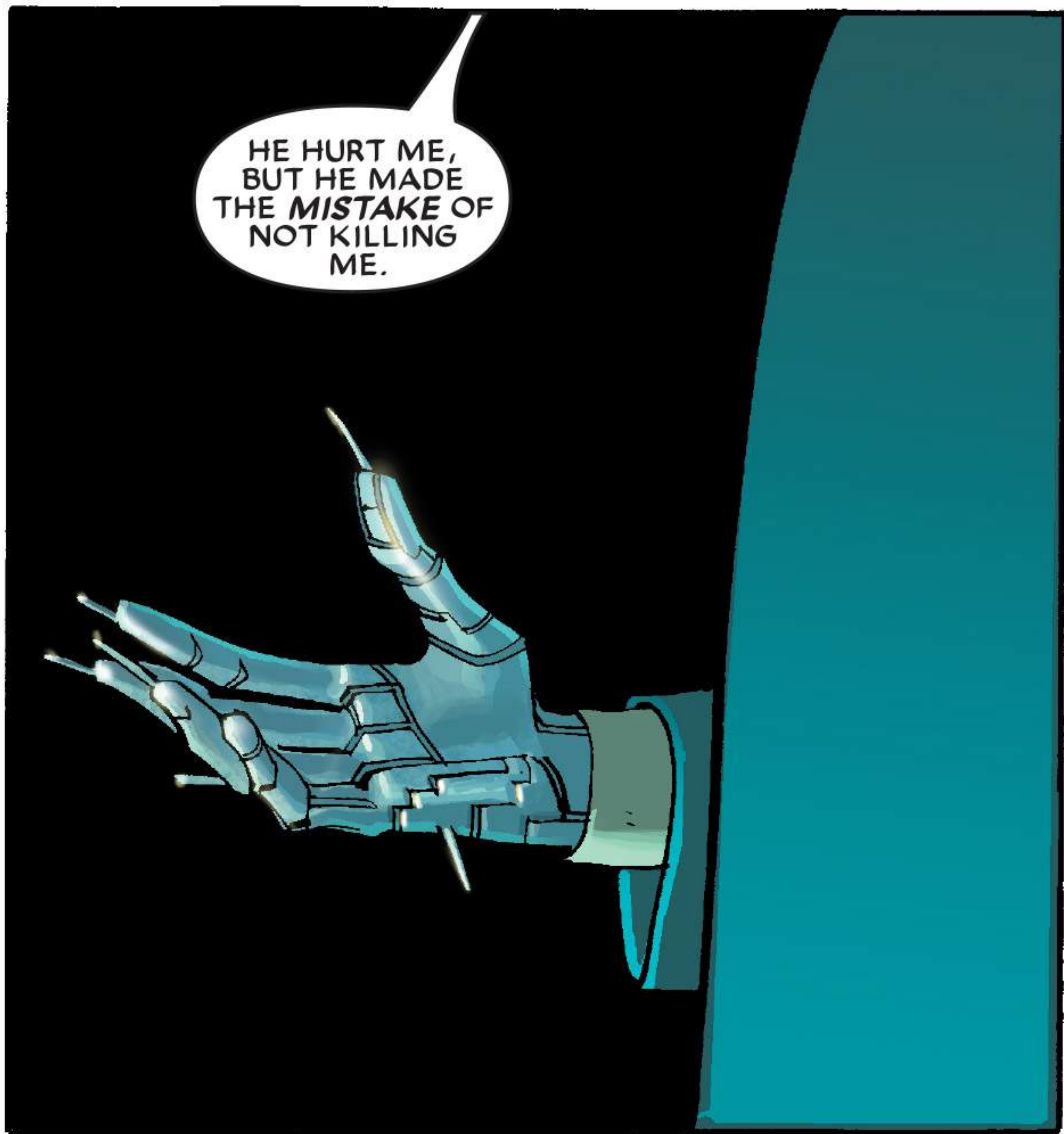


OBVIOUSLY
A PRESIDENTIAL
PARDON IS
APPEALING.

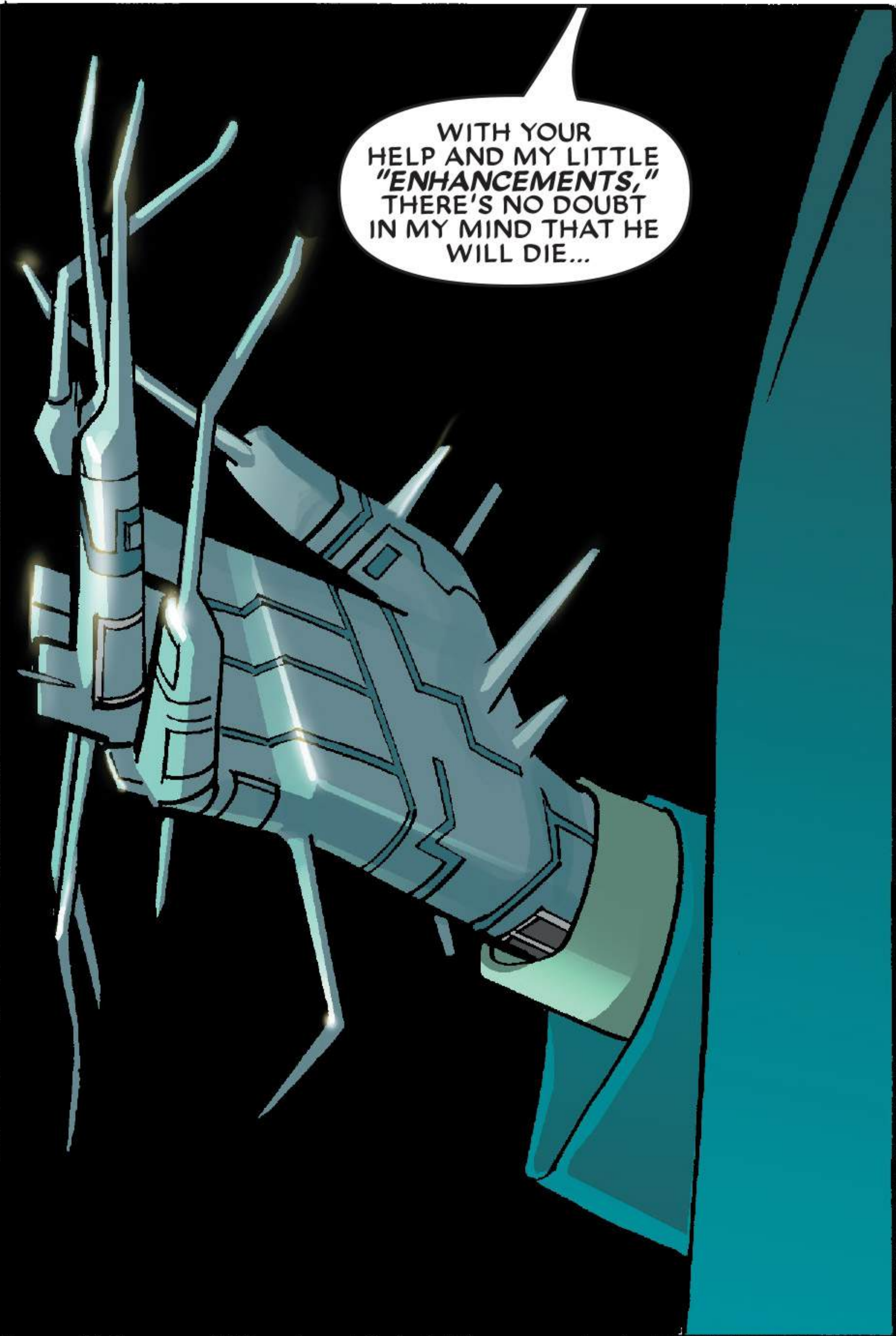


LET'S SAY I **JOIN** YOUR
TEAM. IF THESE WAKANDANS
ARE ALL YOU SAY THEY ARE,
WHAT ARE OUR CHANCES
OF **SUCCESS**?

PRETTY GOOD. I'VE
ALREADY KILLED ONE
BLACK PANTHER 15
YEARS AGO. I **ALMOST**
KILLED HIS SON
THEN.



HE HURT ME,
BUT HE MADE
THE **MISTAKE** OF
NOT KILLING
ME.

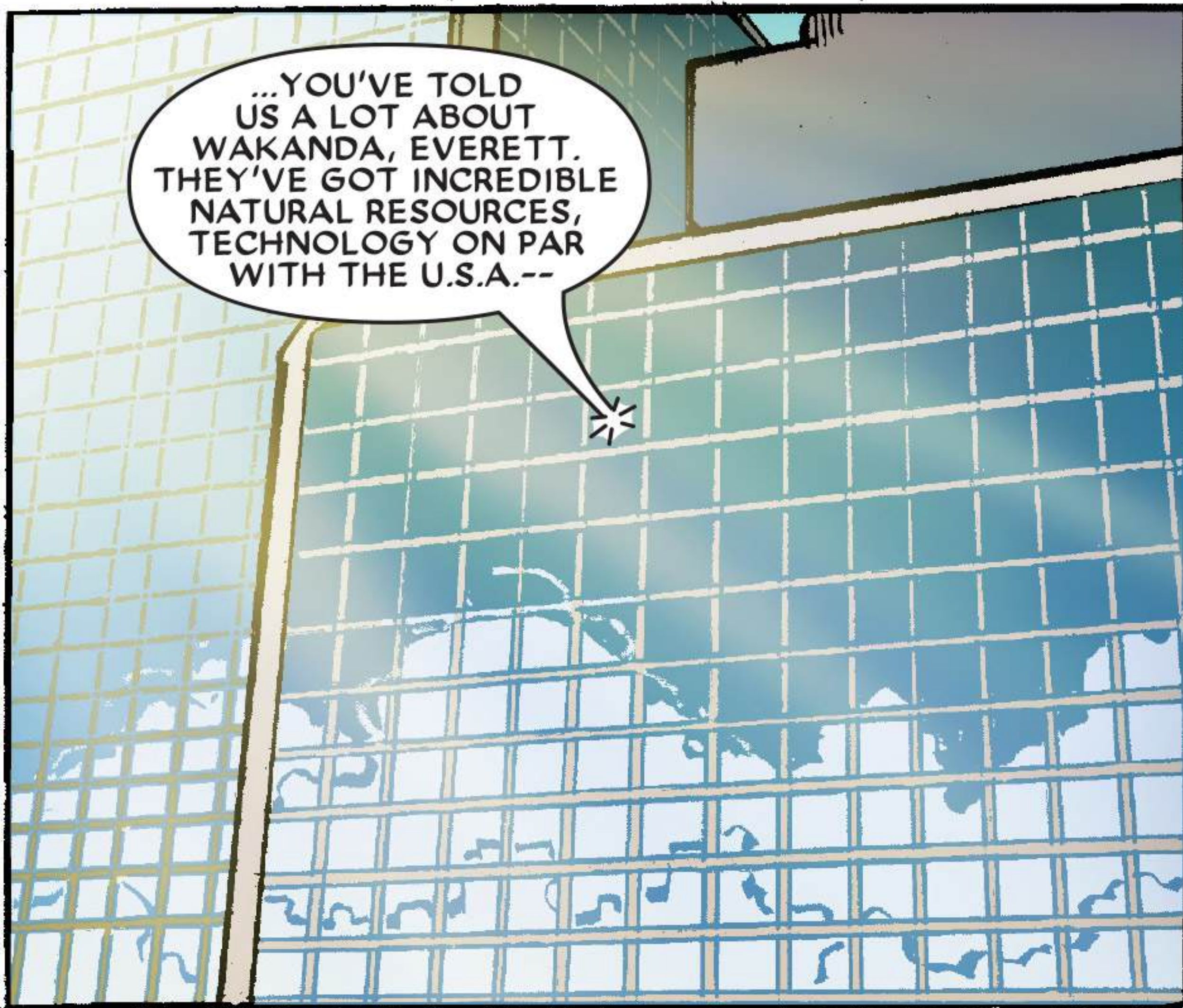


WITH YOUR
HELP AND MY LITTLE
"ENHANCEMENTS,"
THERE'S NO DOUBT
IN MY MIND THAT HE
WILL DIE...



...BY THE
HAND OF
KLAW!





...YOU'VE TOLD US A LOT ABOUT WAKANDA, EVERETT. THEY'VE GOT INCREDIBLE NATURAL RESOURCES, TECHNOLOGY ON PAR WITH THE U.S.A.--

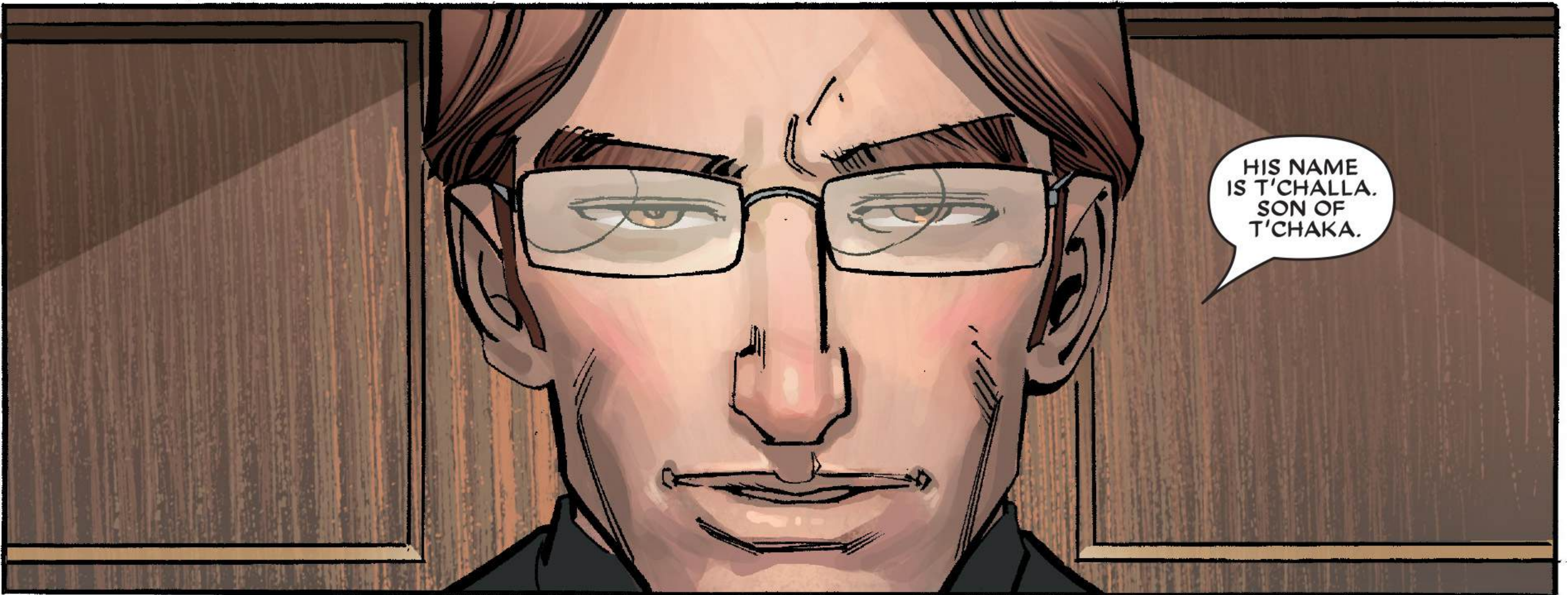


--AND A BAD ATTITUDE WHEN IT COMES TO INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, DONDI!



RIGHT. WHAT WE DON'T KNOW IS:

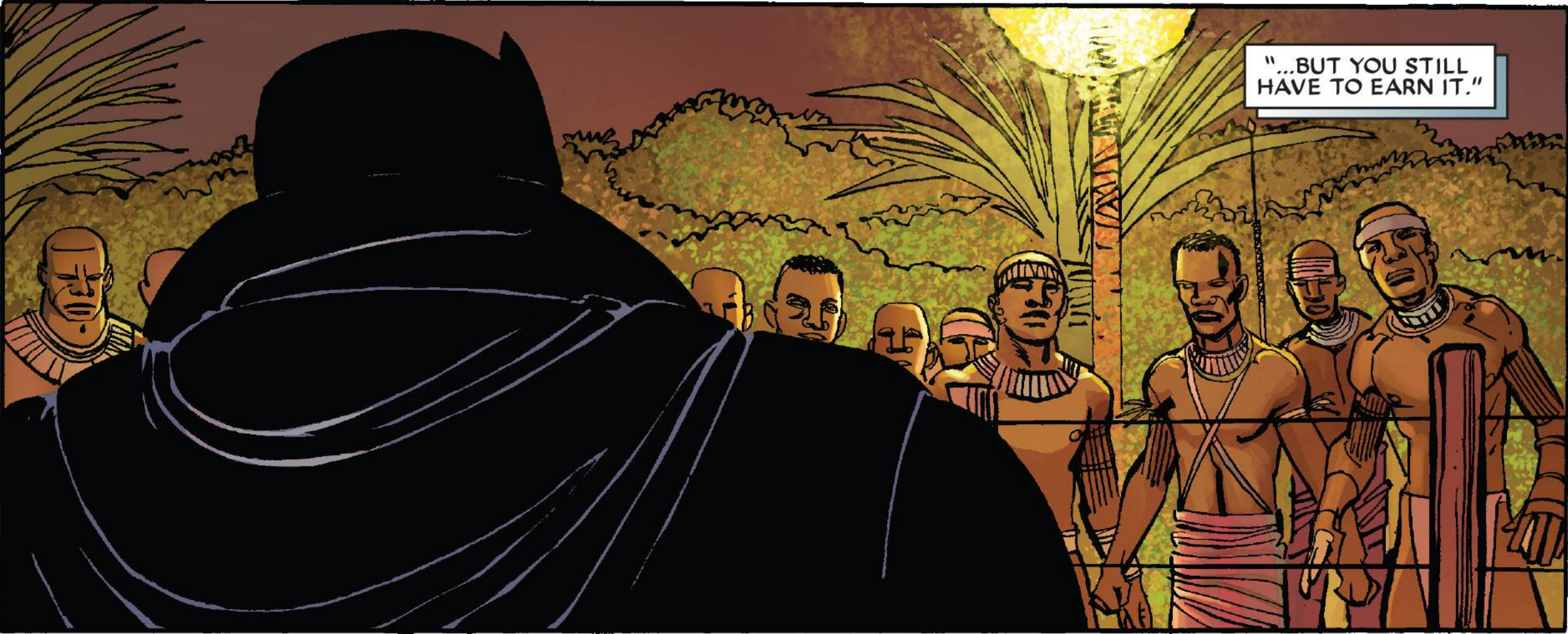
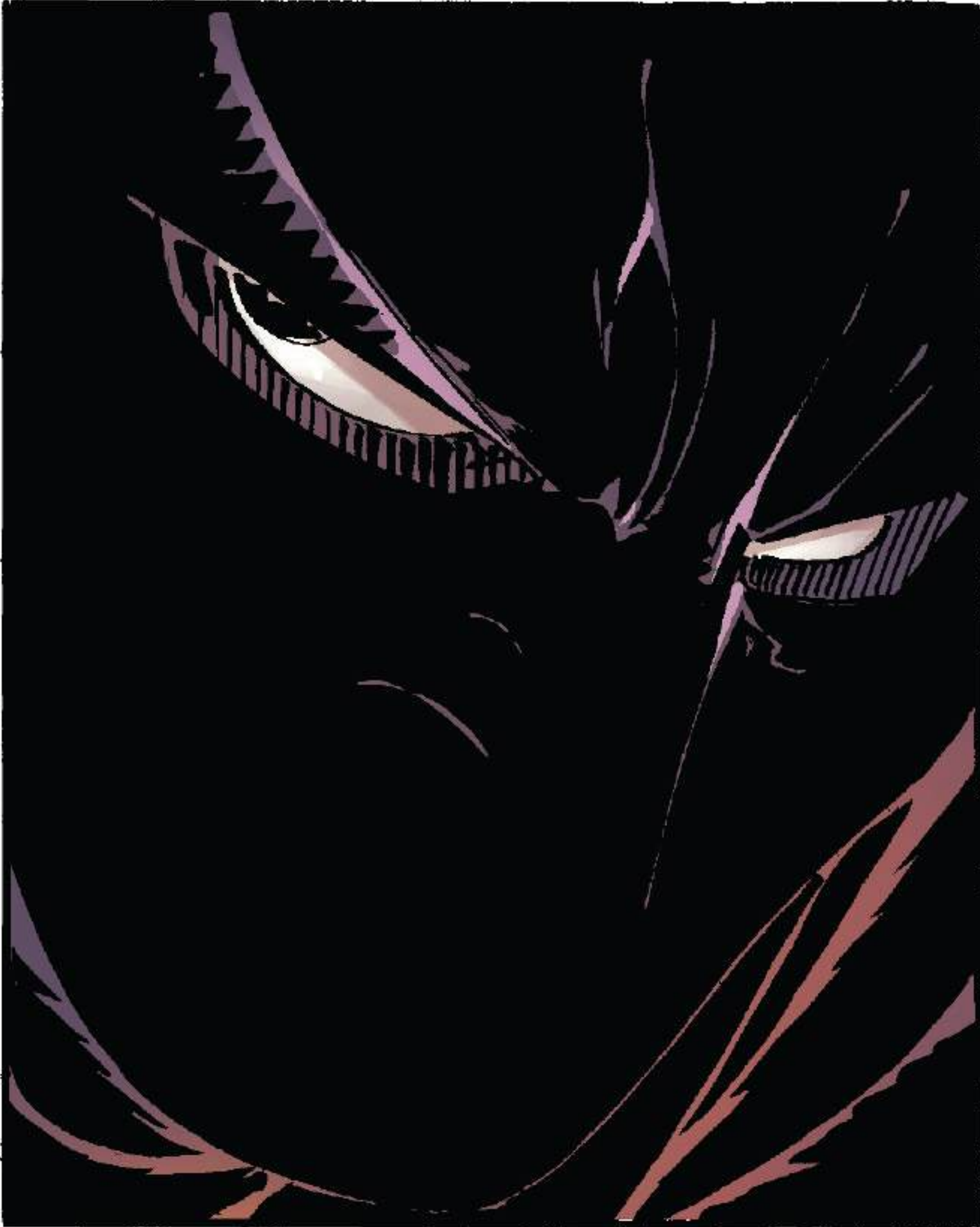
WHO IS THE BLACK PANTHER?



HIS NAME IS T'CHALLA. SON OF T'CHAKA.

WHO IS THE BLACK PANTHER? PART TWO





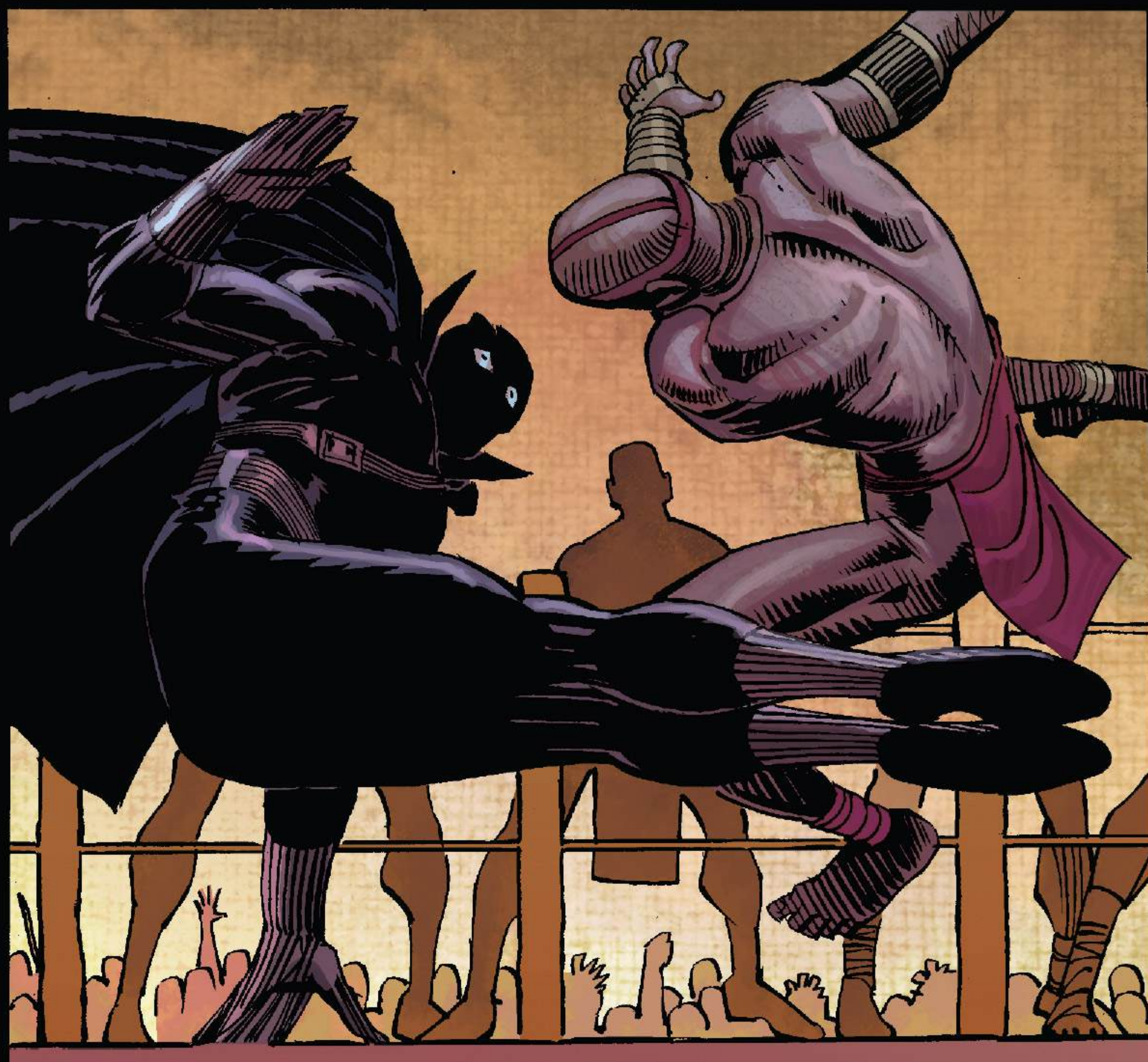
"THE SERIES OF TESTS THAT A PANTHER MUST PASS ARE SO ARDUOUS THAT ONLY CANDIDATES WHO'VE HAD SPECIAL TRAINING FROM CHILDHOOD CAN QUALIFY."

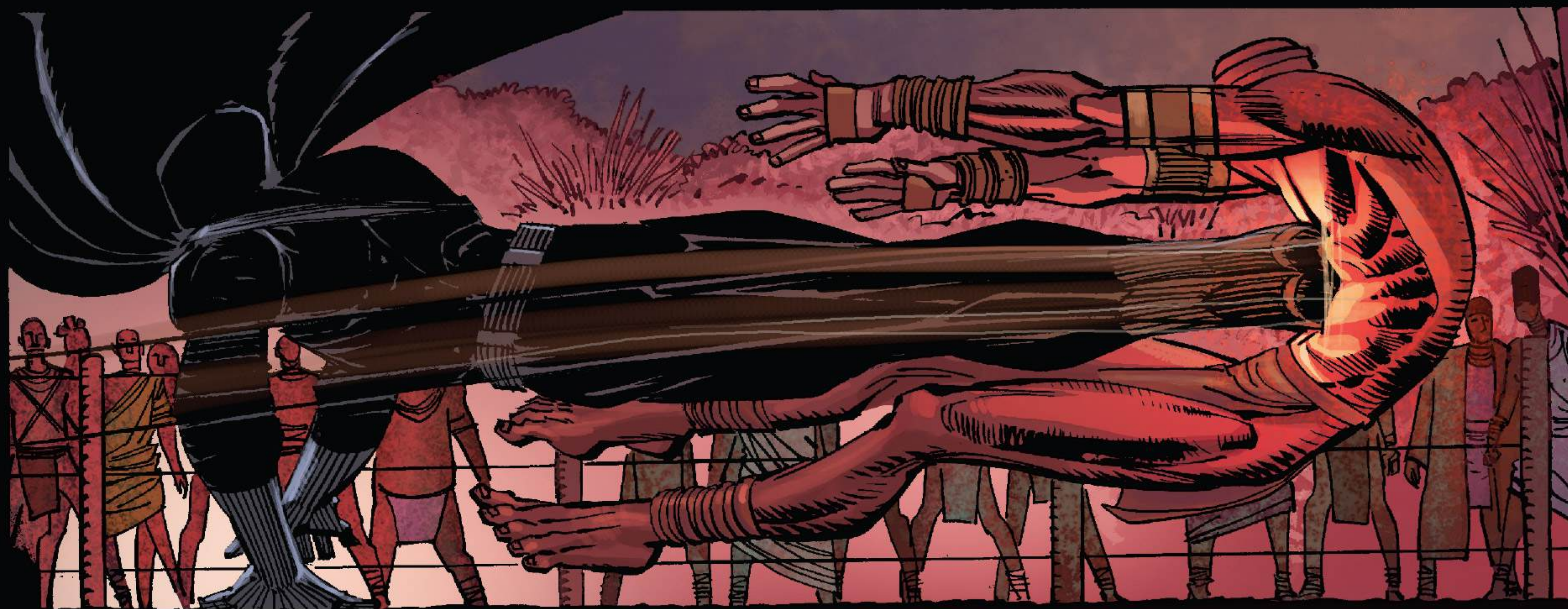


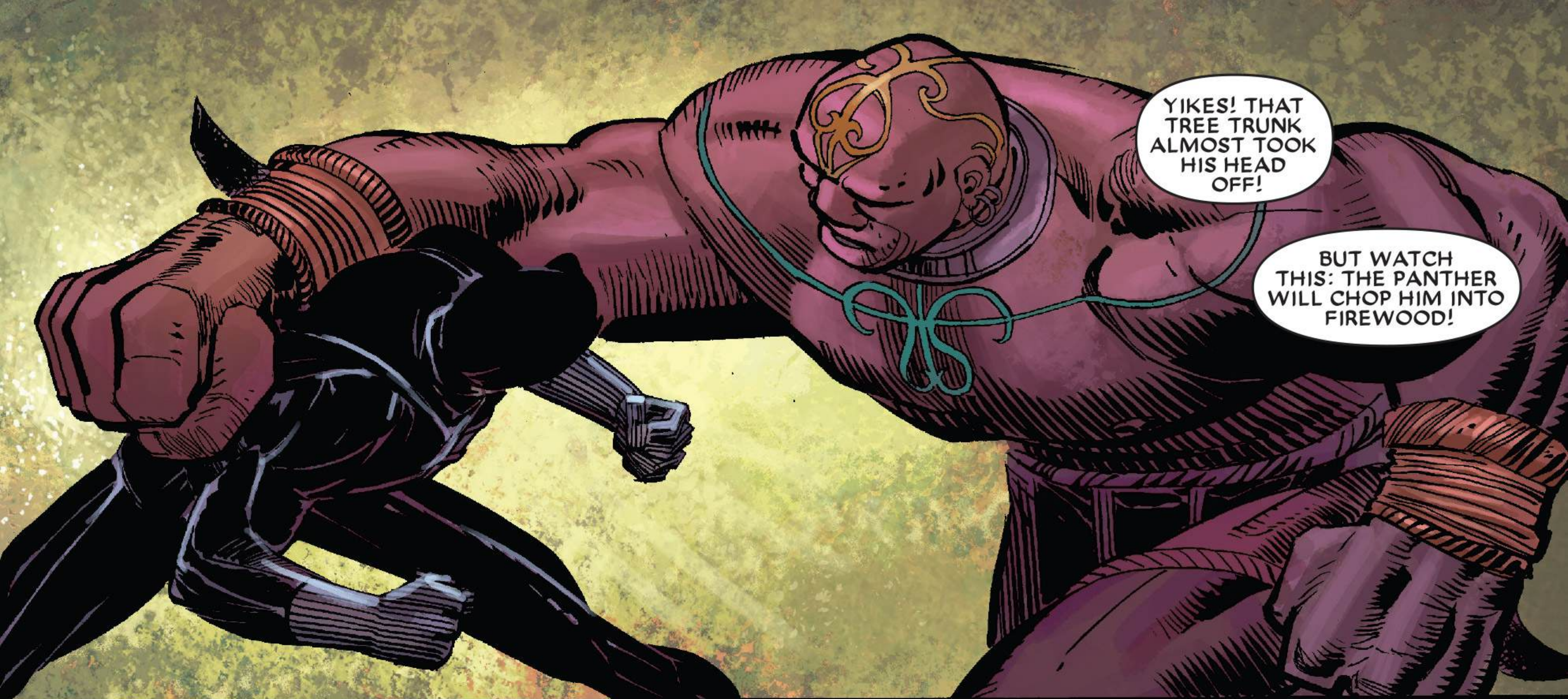
"BUT JUST SO EVERYONE GETS A CHANCE, ONCE A YEAR THERE'S A DAY WHEN ANY WAKANDAN CAN CHALLENGE THE KING FOR THE THRONE."



"SO AS ROYAL LINEAGES GO, IT'S A LOT MORE OF A MERITOCRACY THAN, SAY, ENGLAND."

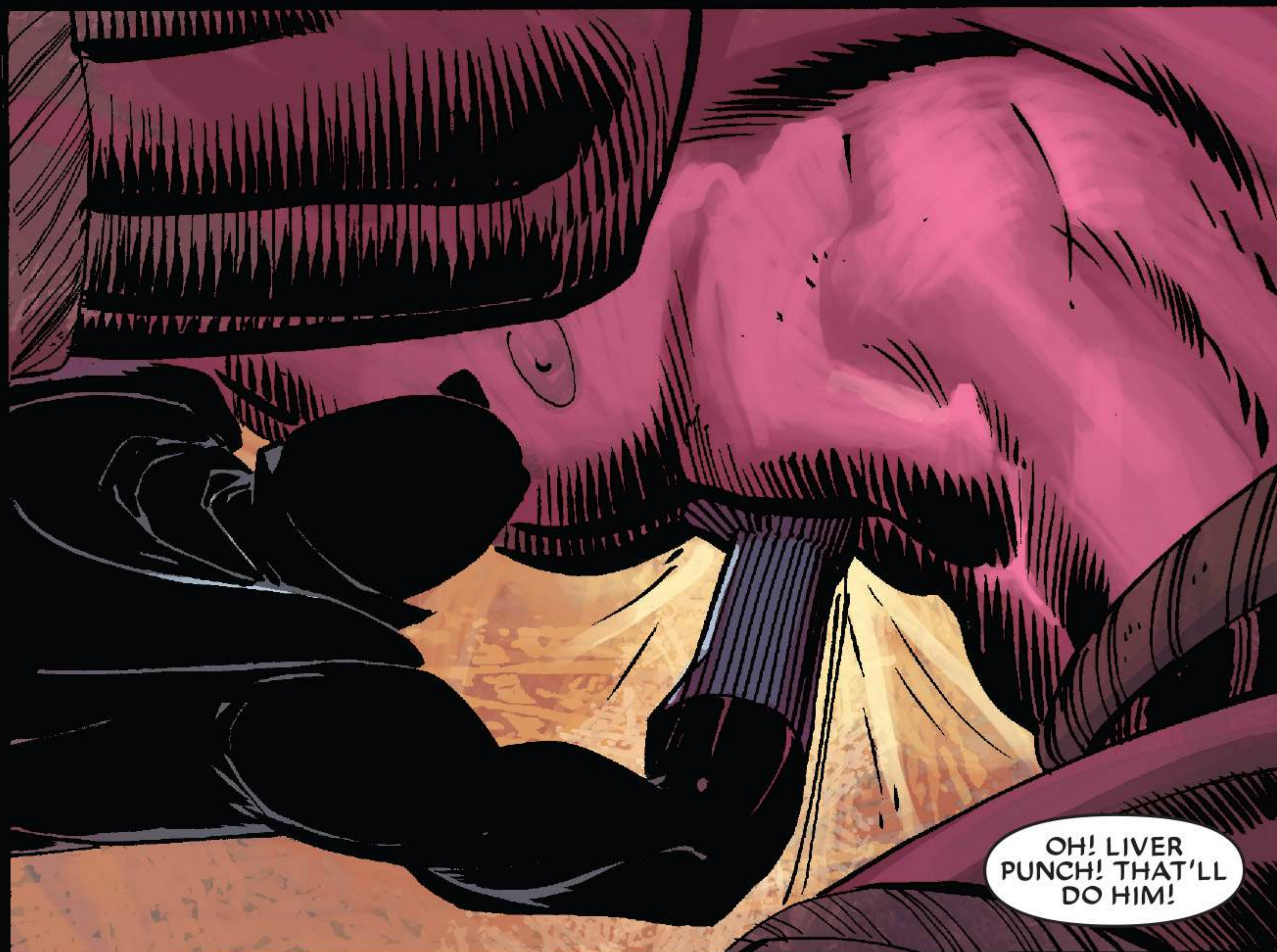




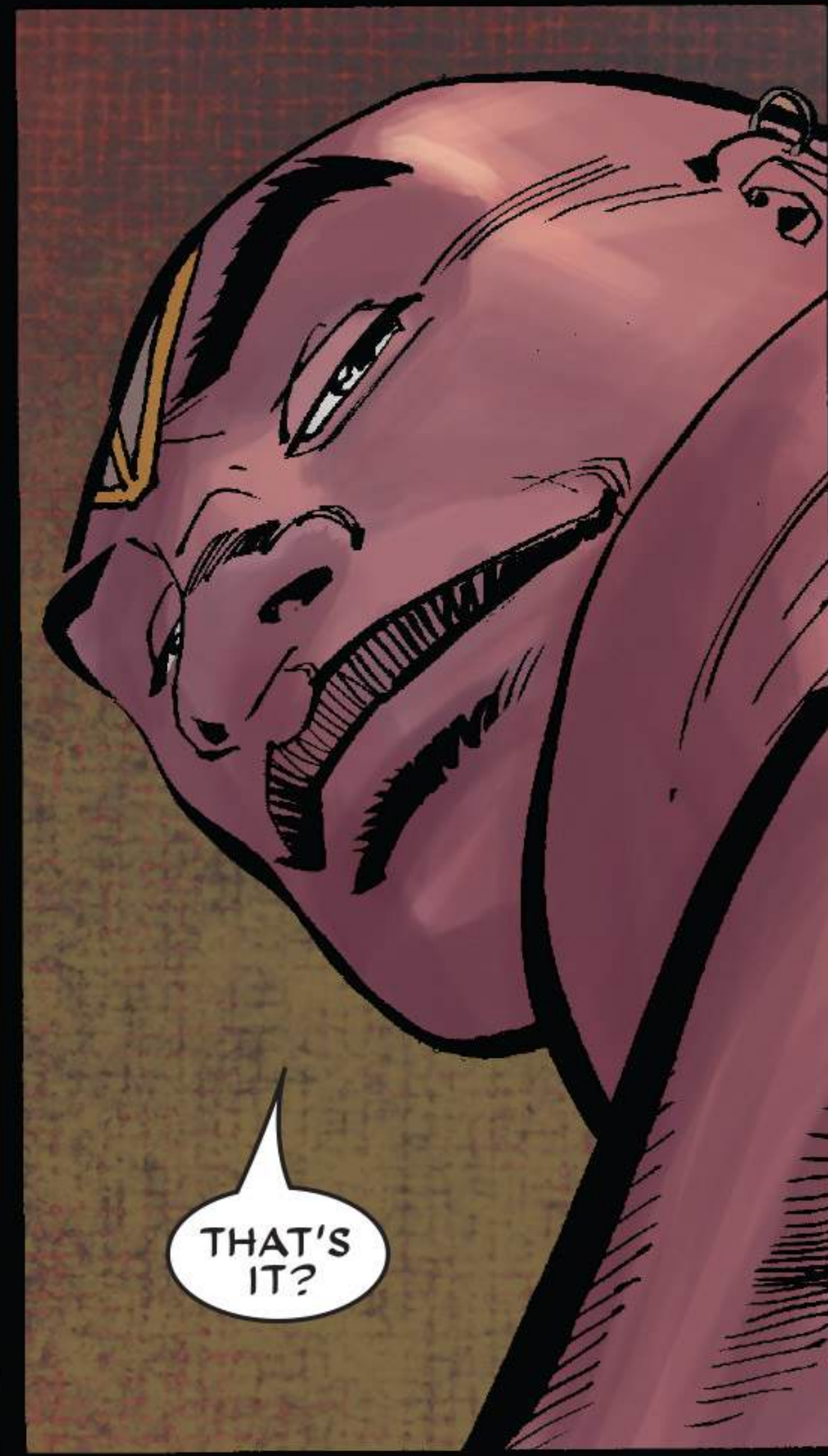


YIKES! THAT
TREE TRUNK
ALMOST TOOK
HIS HEAD
OFF!

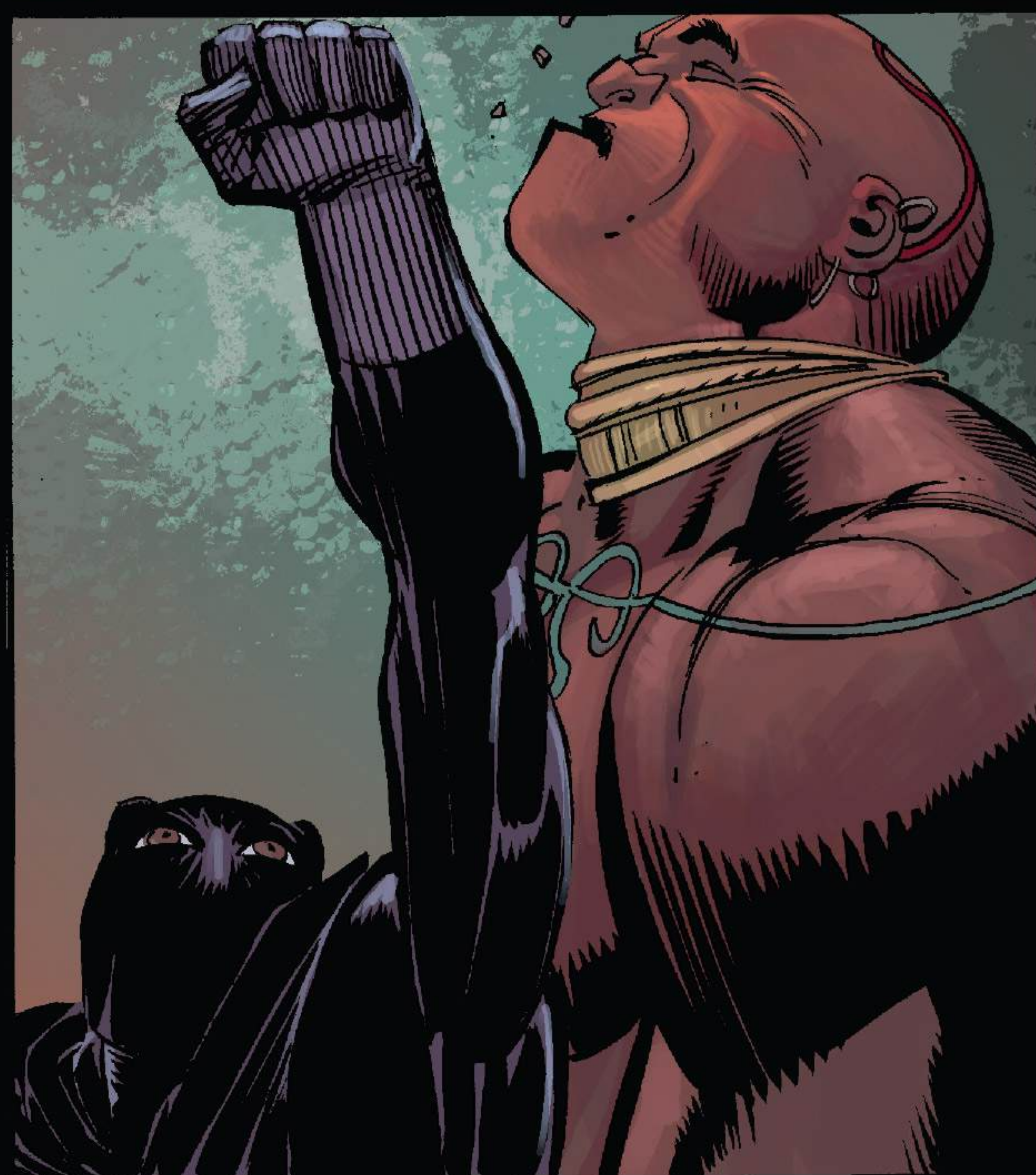
BUT WATCH
THIS: THE PANTHER
WILL CHOP HIM INTO
FIREWOOD!



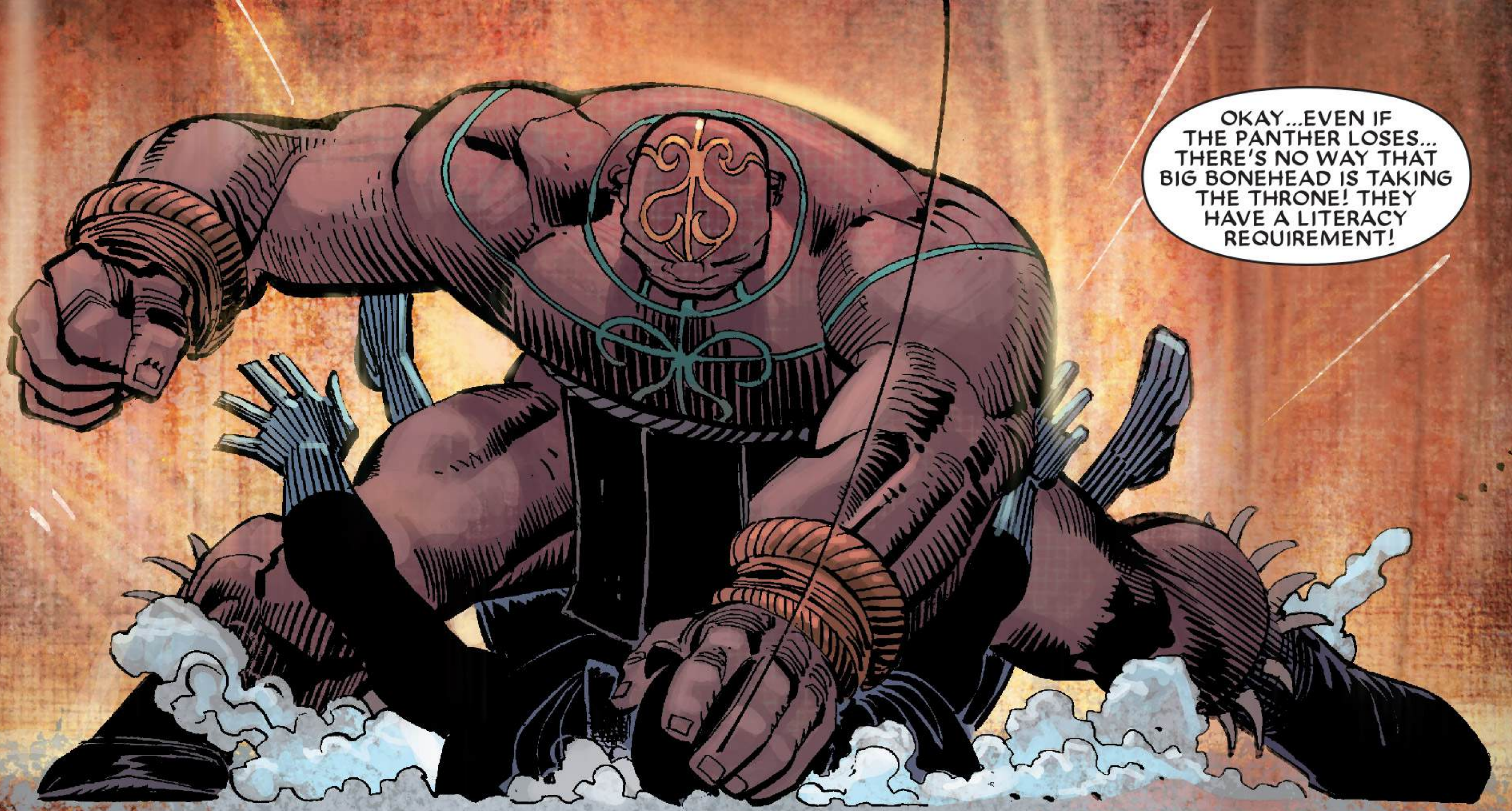
OH! LIVER
PUNCH! THAT'LL
DO HIM!



THAT'S
IT?



A KNOCKOUT
MAY NOT BE
ENOUGH TO TAKE
THE CROWN. I
MIGHT HAVE
TO KILL YOU.



OKAY...EVEN IF THE PANTHER LOSES... THERE'S NO WAY THAT BIG BONEHEAD IS TAKING THE THRONE! THEY HAVE A LITERACY REQUIREMENT!



HAVE YOU HEARD ANYTHING YET?

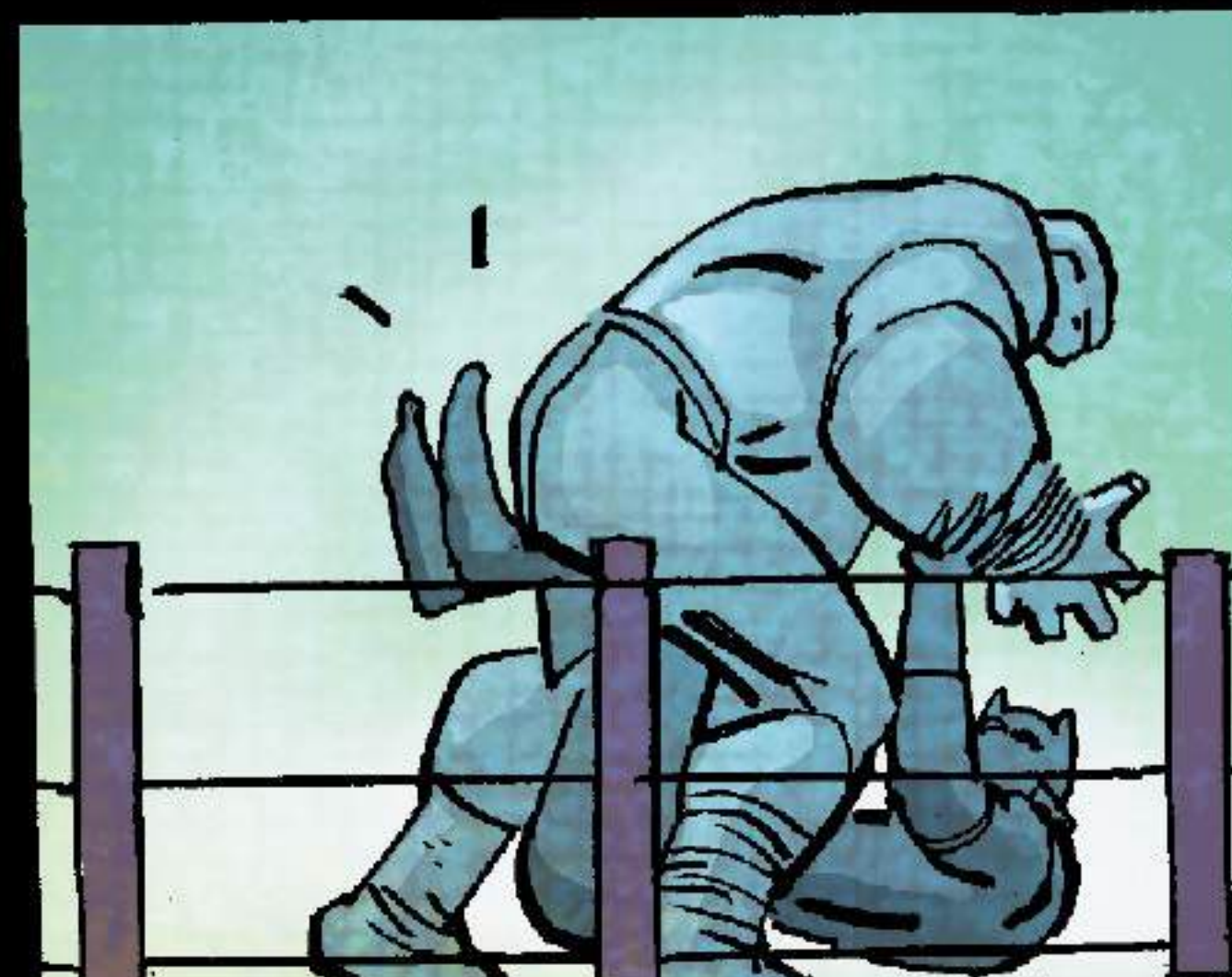


NO, YOUR HIGHNESS.

I CAN'T TAKE THIS STUPID RITUAL EVERY YEAR! IT'S TOO NERVE-WRACKING.



NOT GOING IS WORSE THAN BEING THERE.



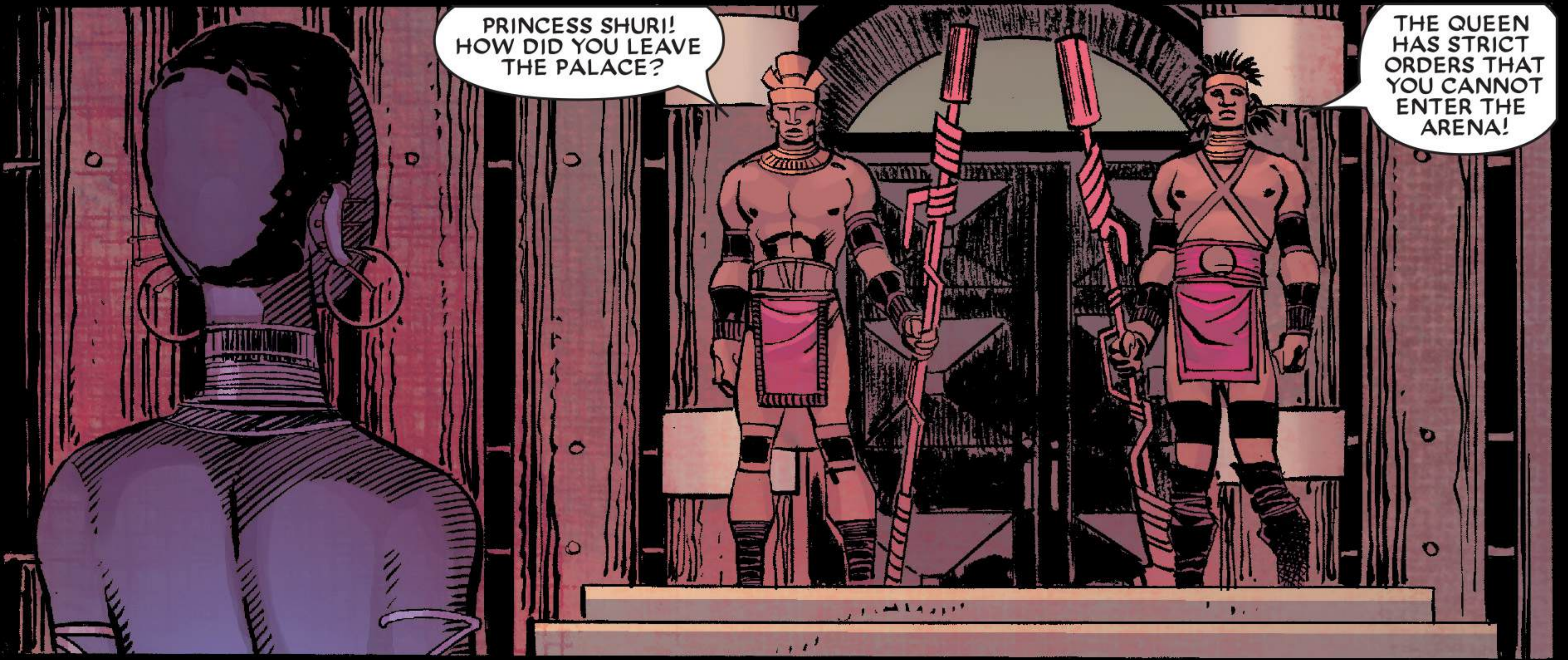
PERHAPS YOU SHOULD VISIT THE PRINCESS. I'M SURE SHE'S DEPRESSED SINCE YOU LOCKED HER IN HER ROOM TO STOP HER FROM ATTENDING THE TOURNAMENT.



GOOD IDEA!

SHURI...IT'S MOTHER!

SHURI?



PRINCESS SHURI!
HOW DID YOU LEAVE
THE PALACE?

THE QUEEN
HAS STRICT
ORDERS THAT
YOU CANNOT
ENTER THE
ARENA!



WELL, I
HATE TO
GET YOU IN
TROUBLE...



BUT
I GOT TO
GO!

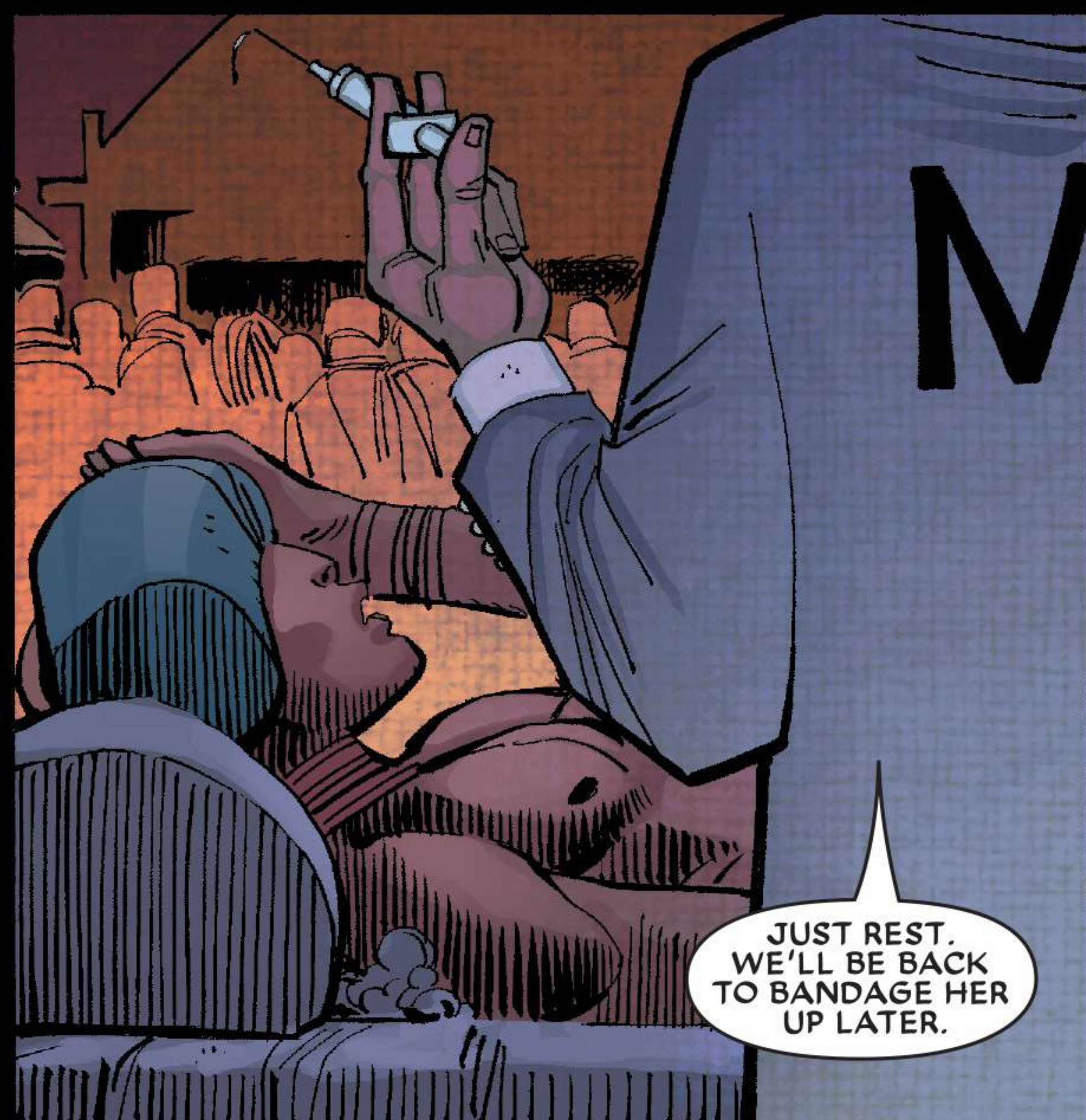
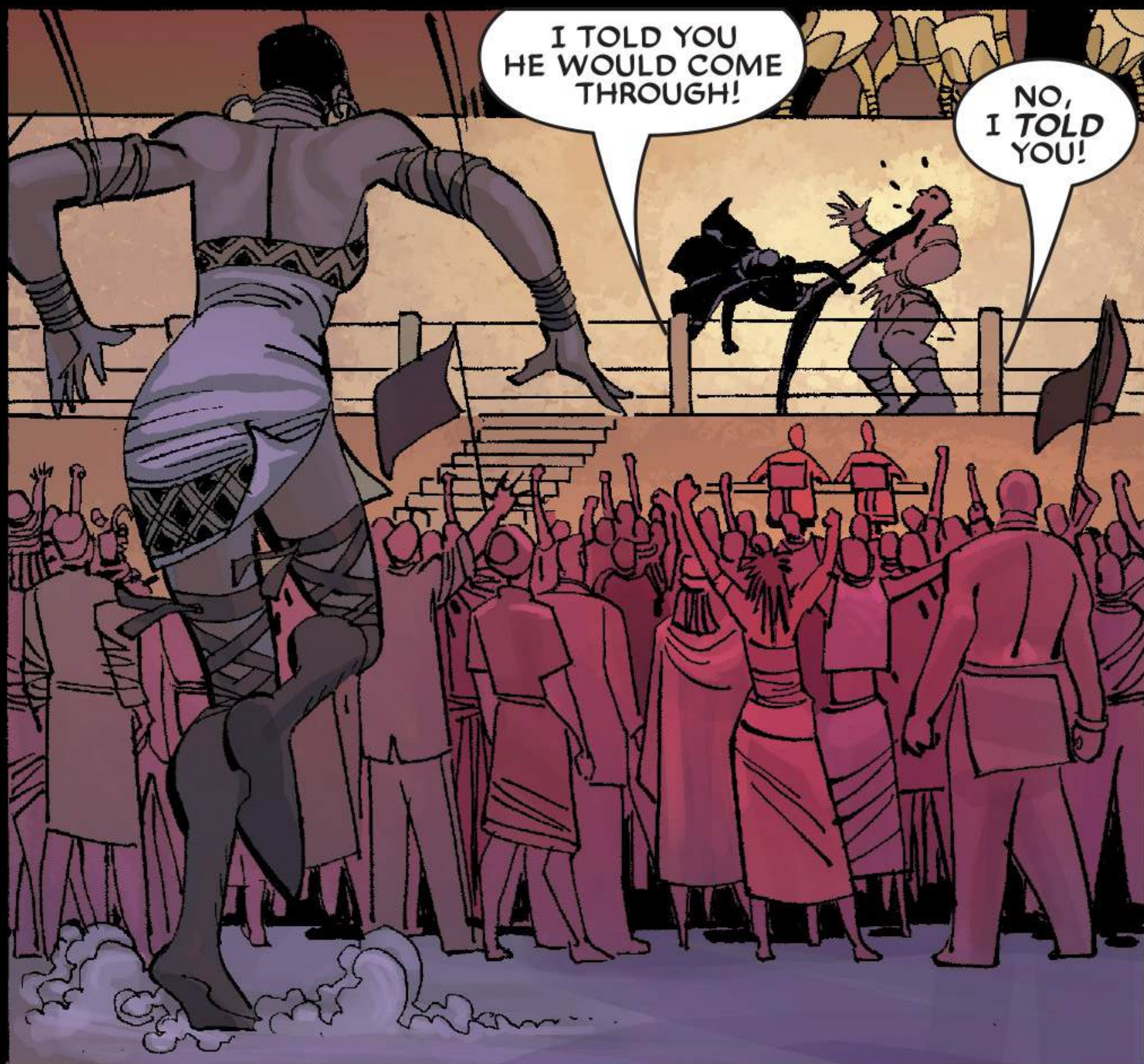


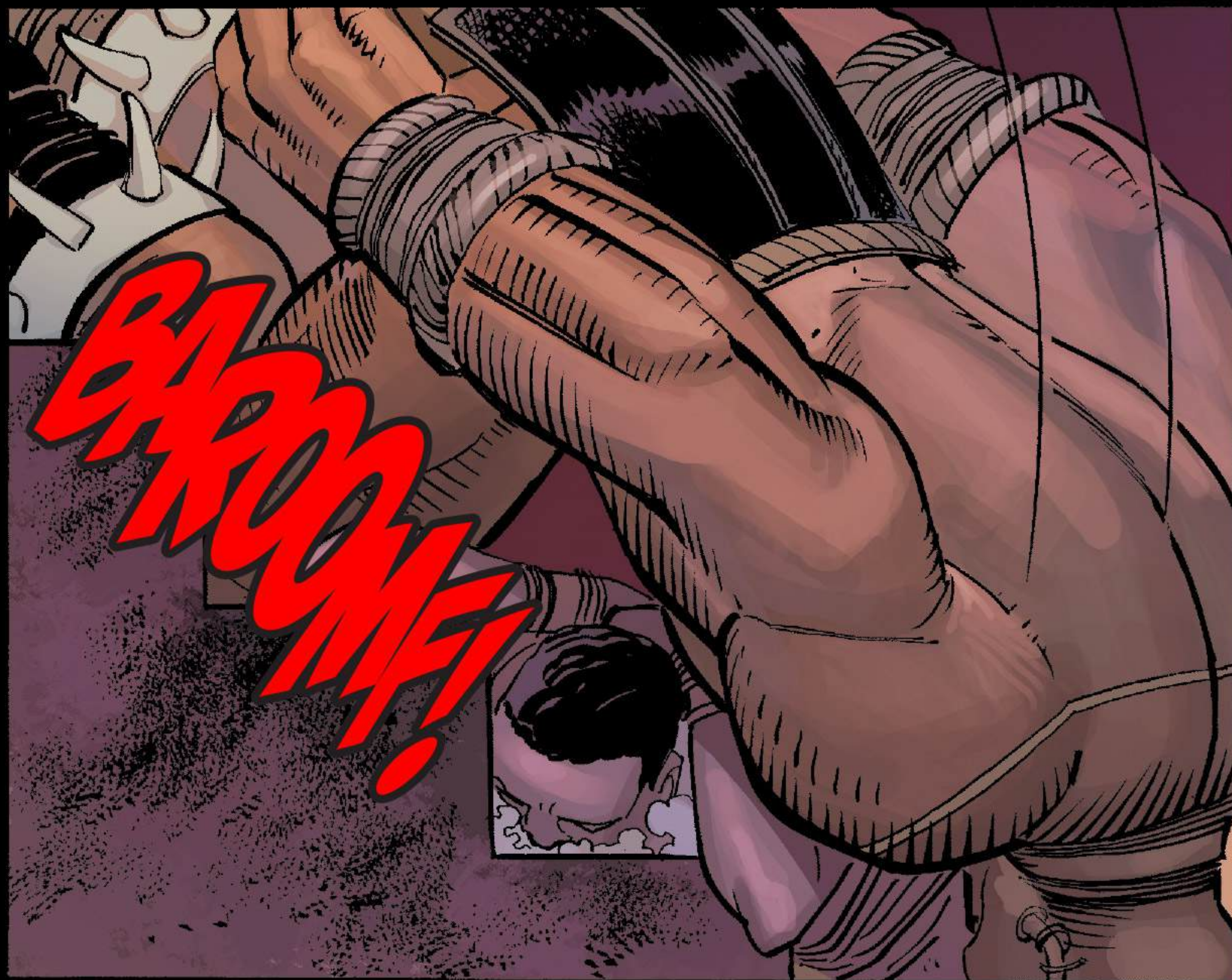
MY BROTHER
ISN'T THE ONLY
PANTHER IN THE
FAMILY...

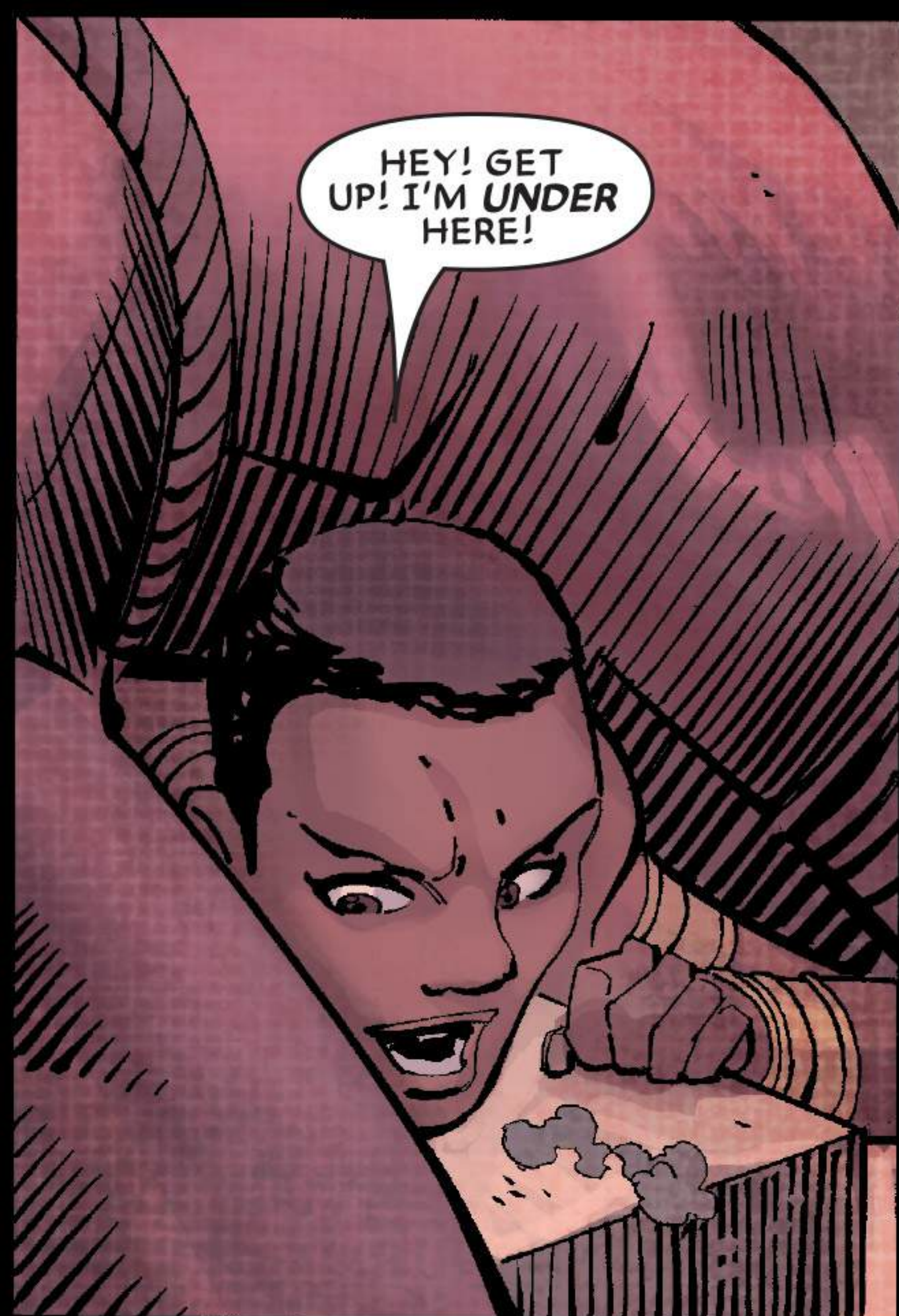
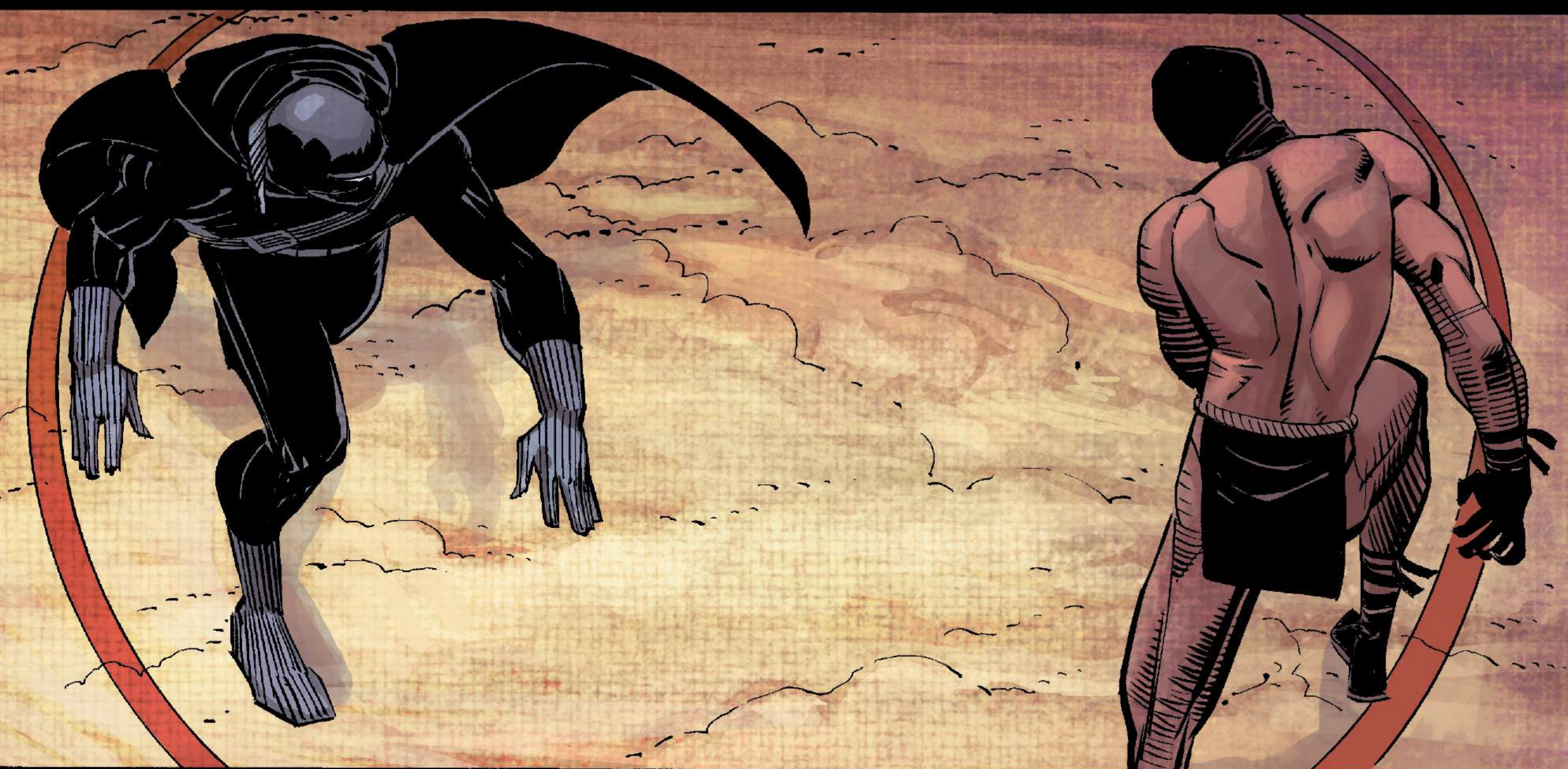
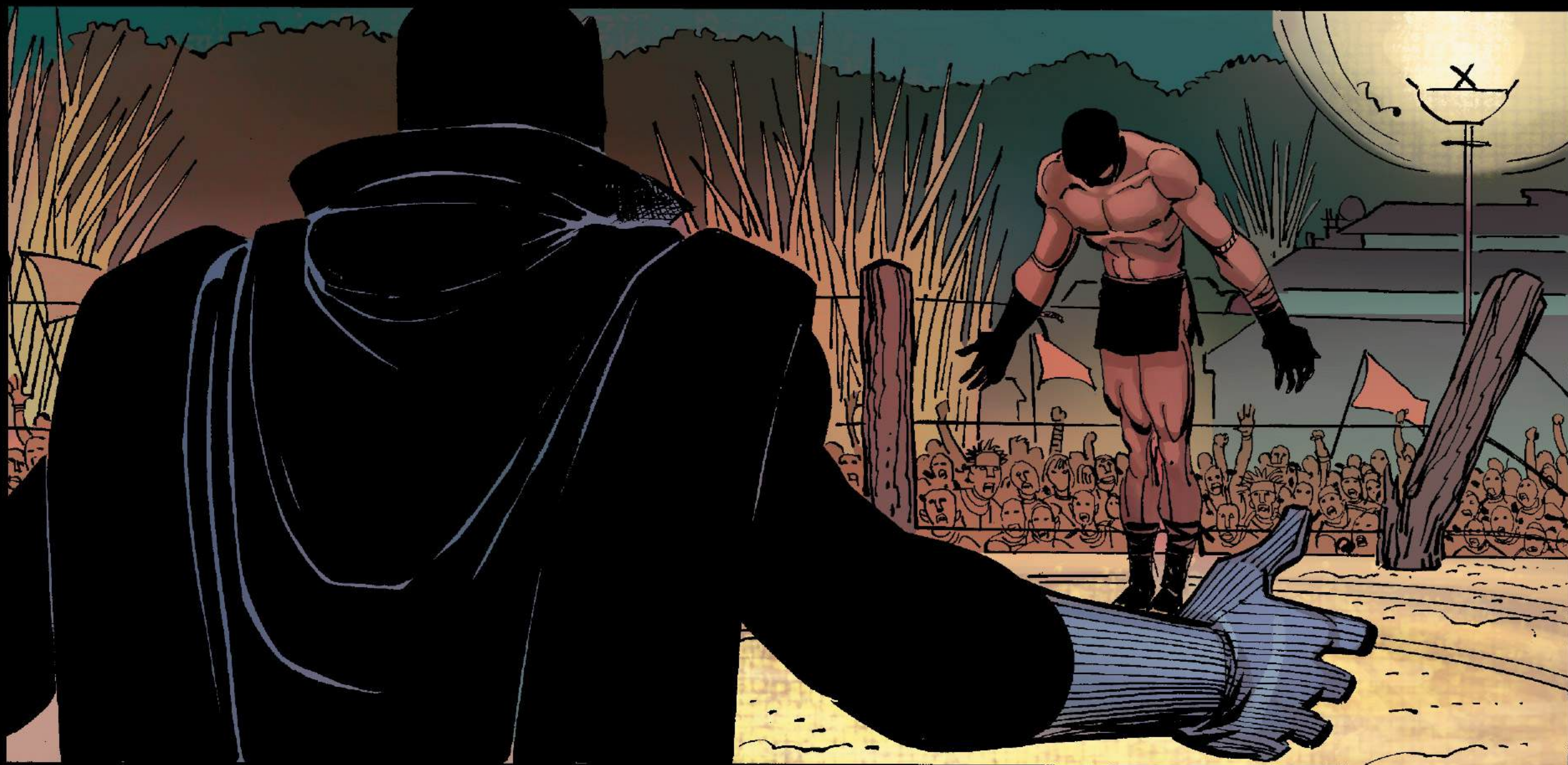


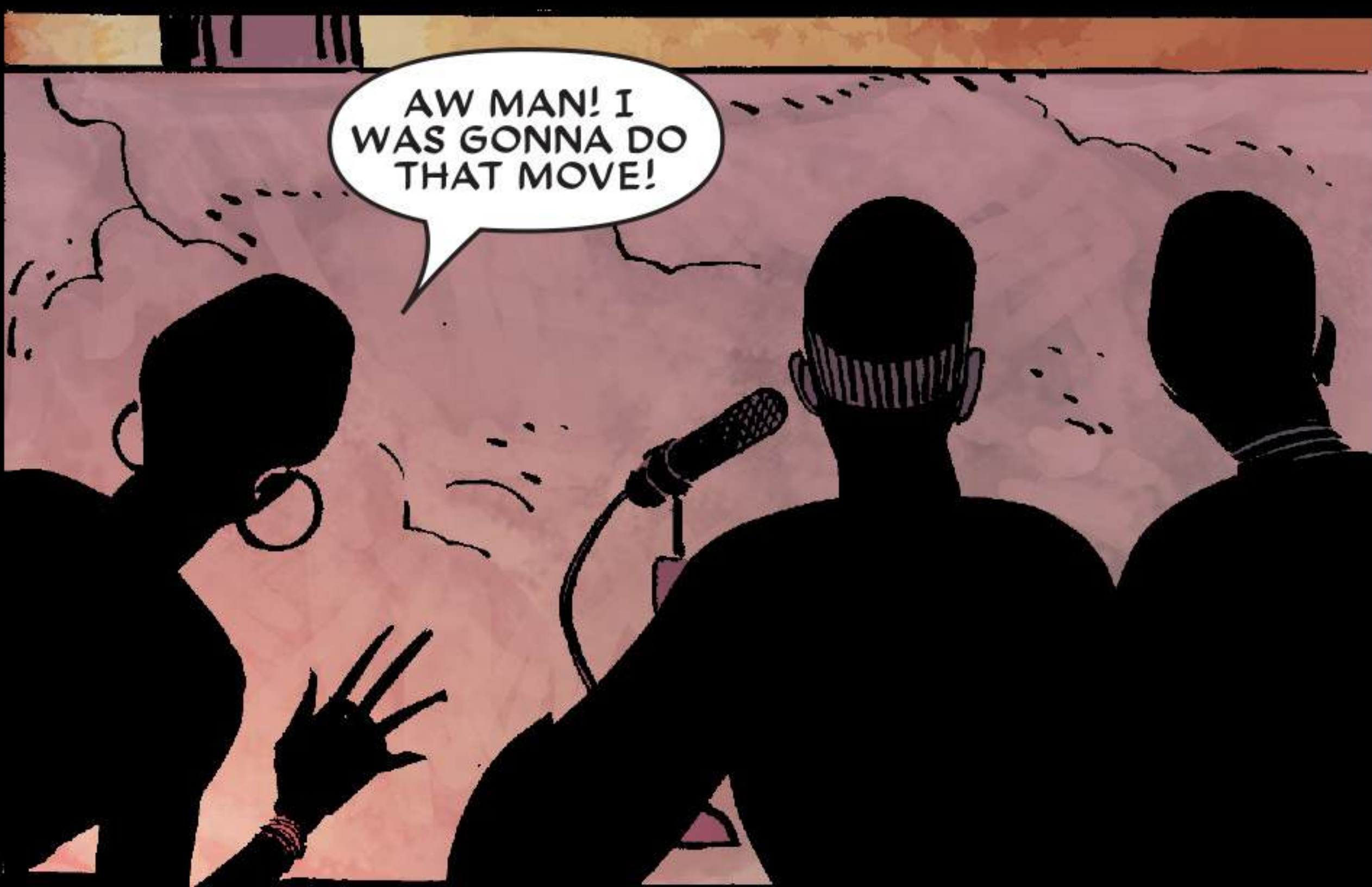
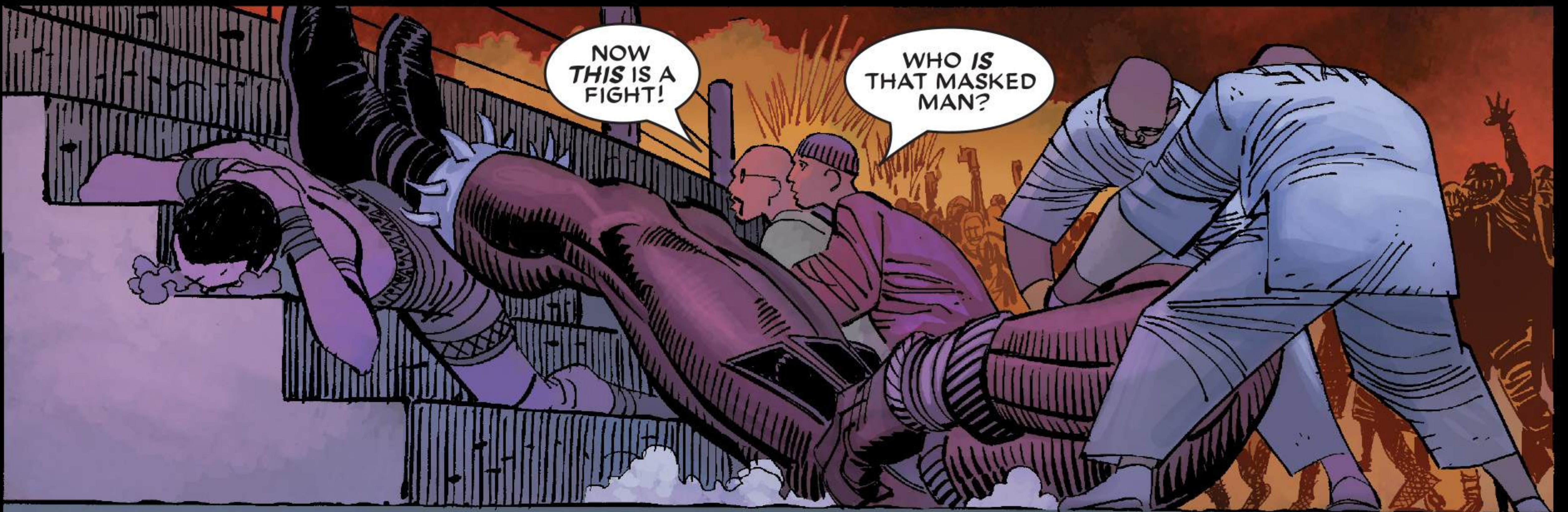
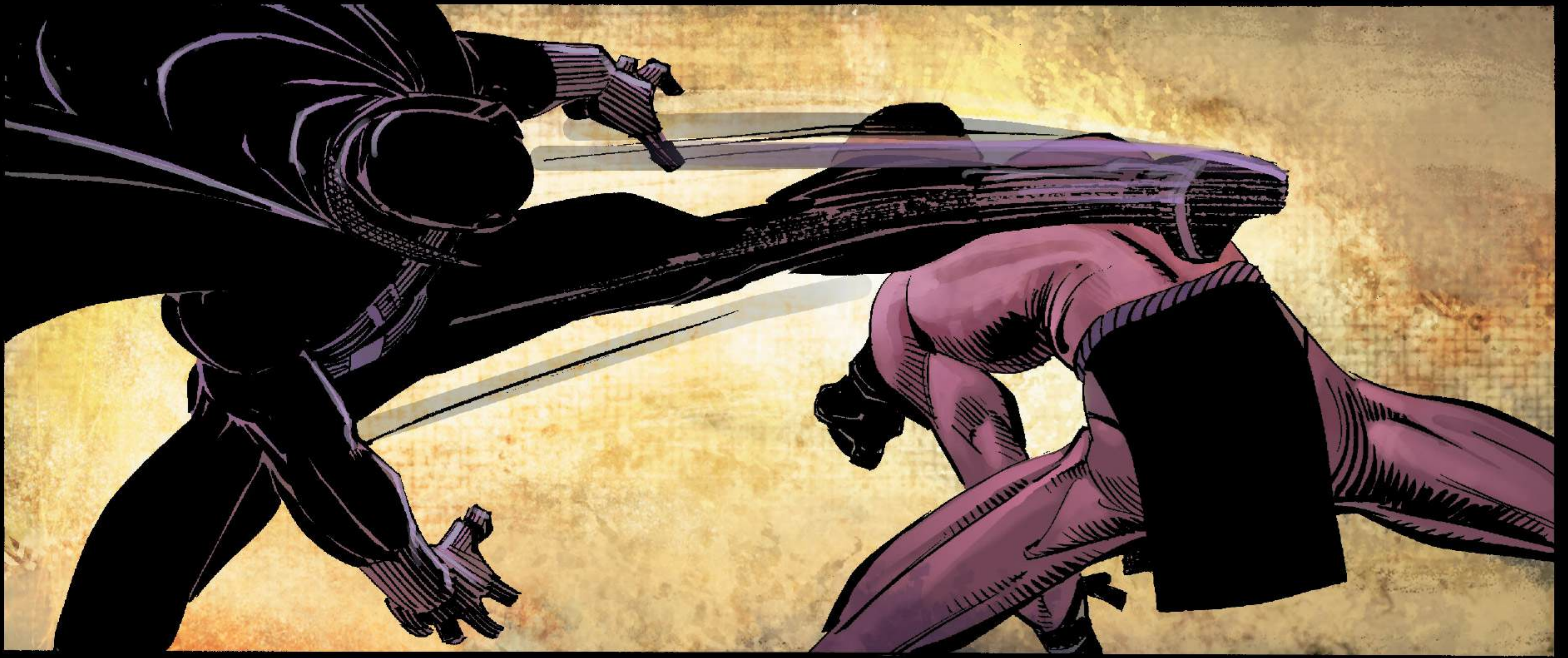
THIS ISN'T
GOOD.

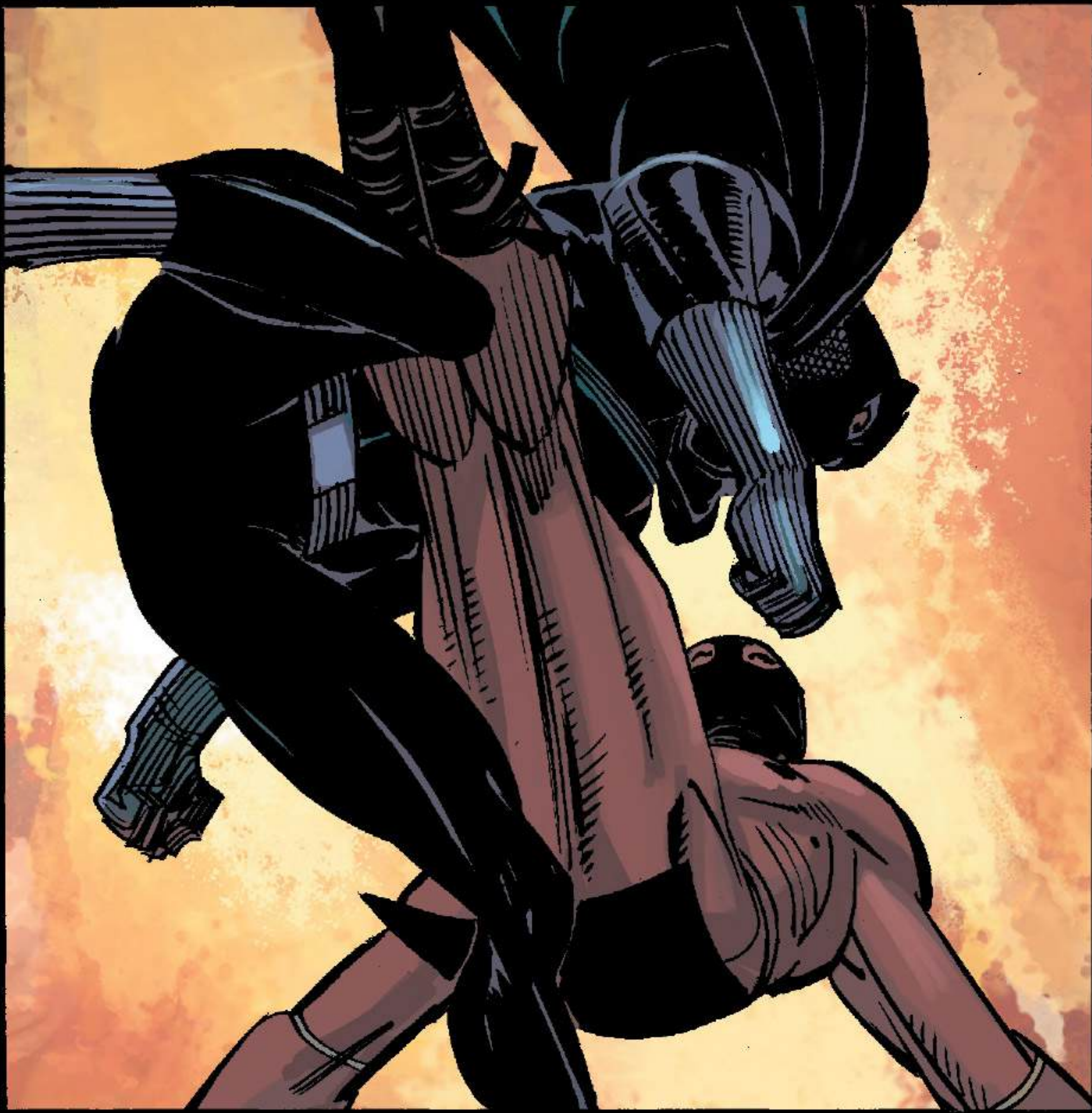
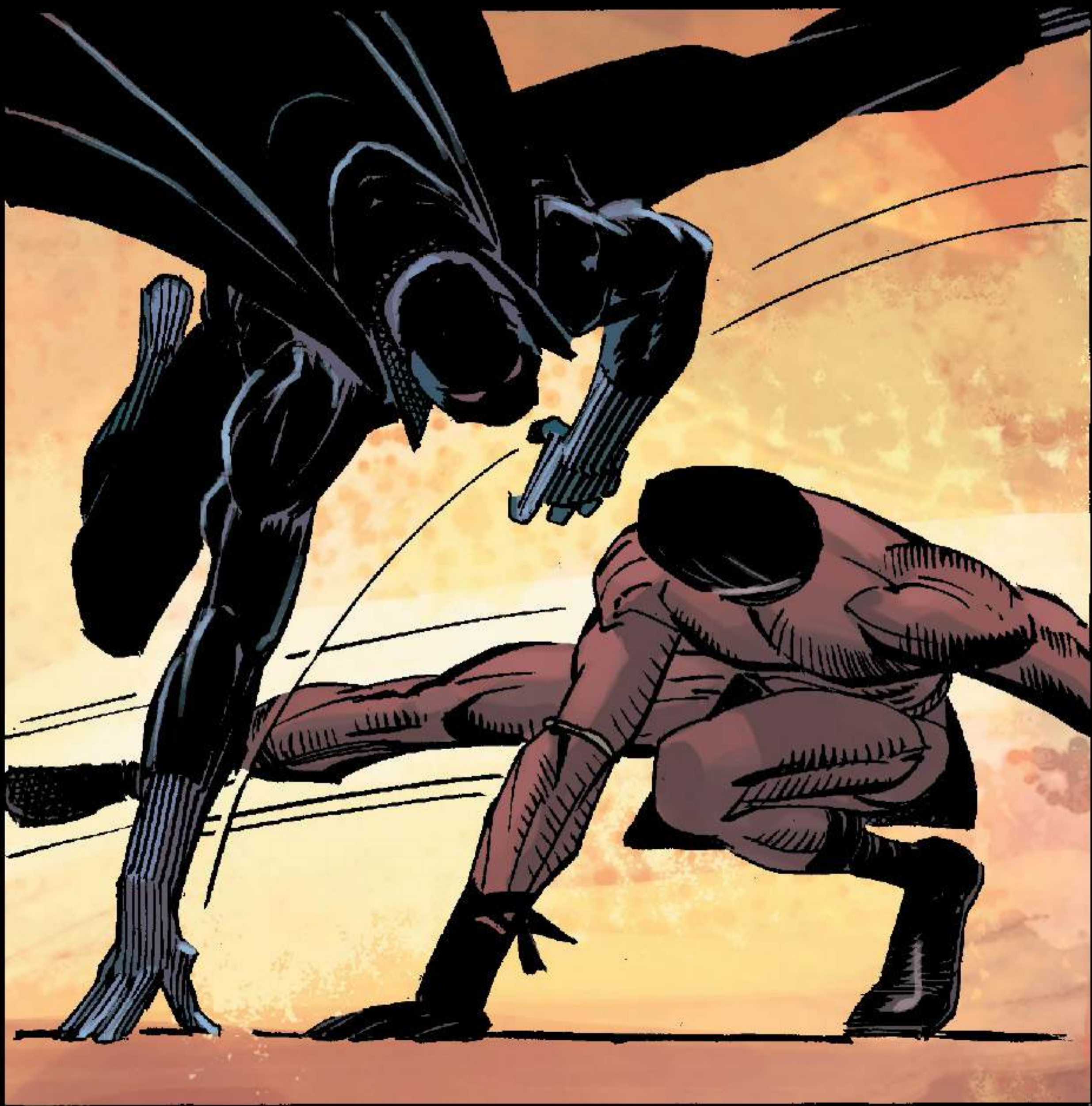
AND I
NEED THIS
JOB!

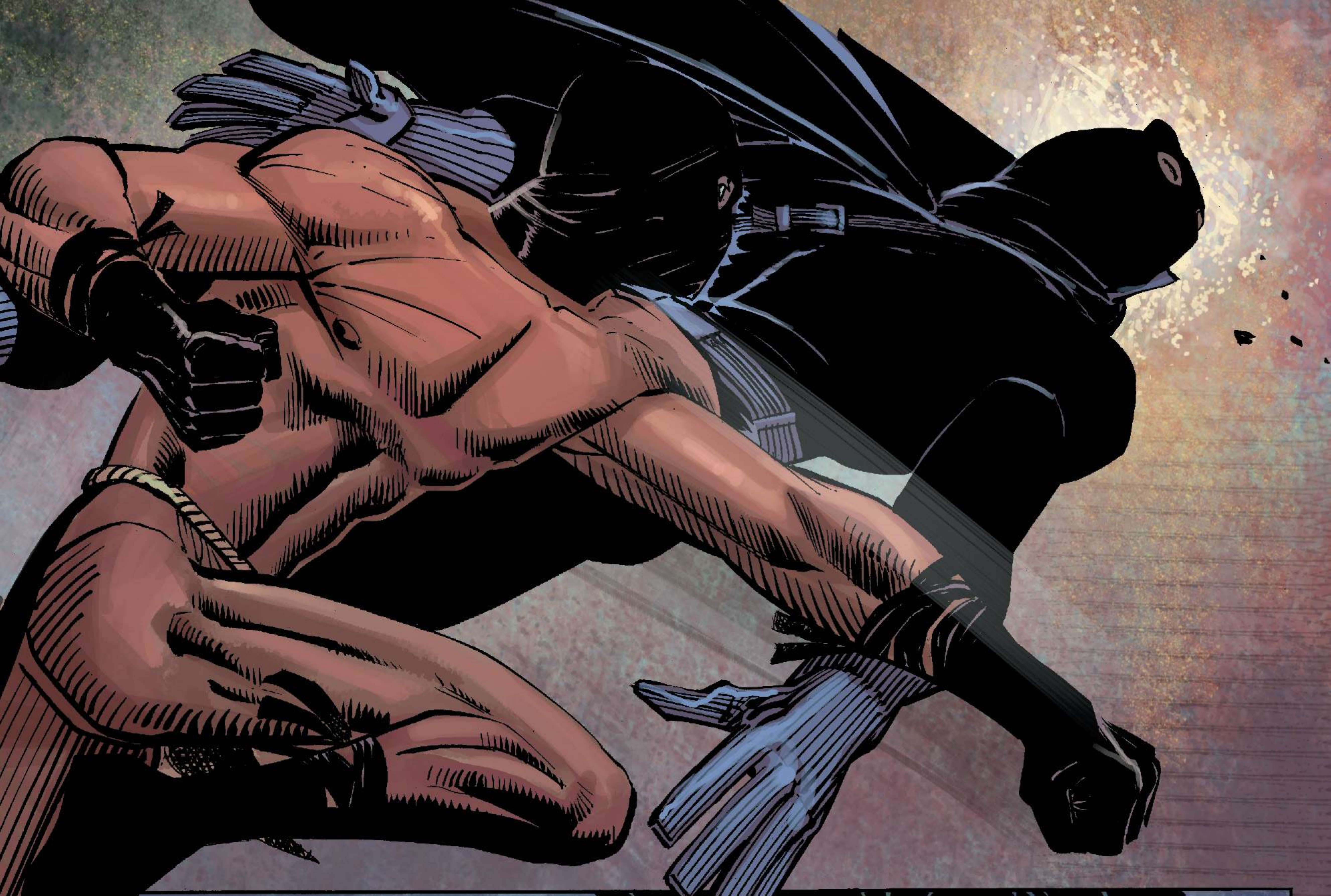


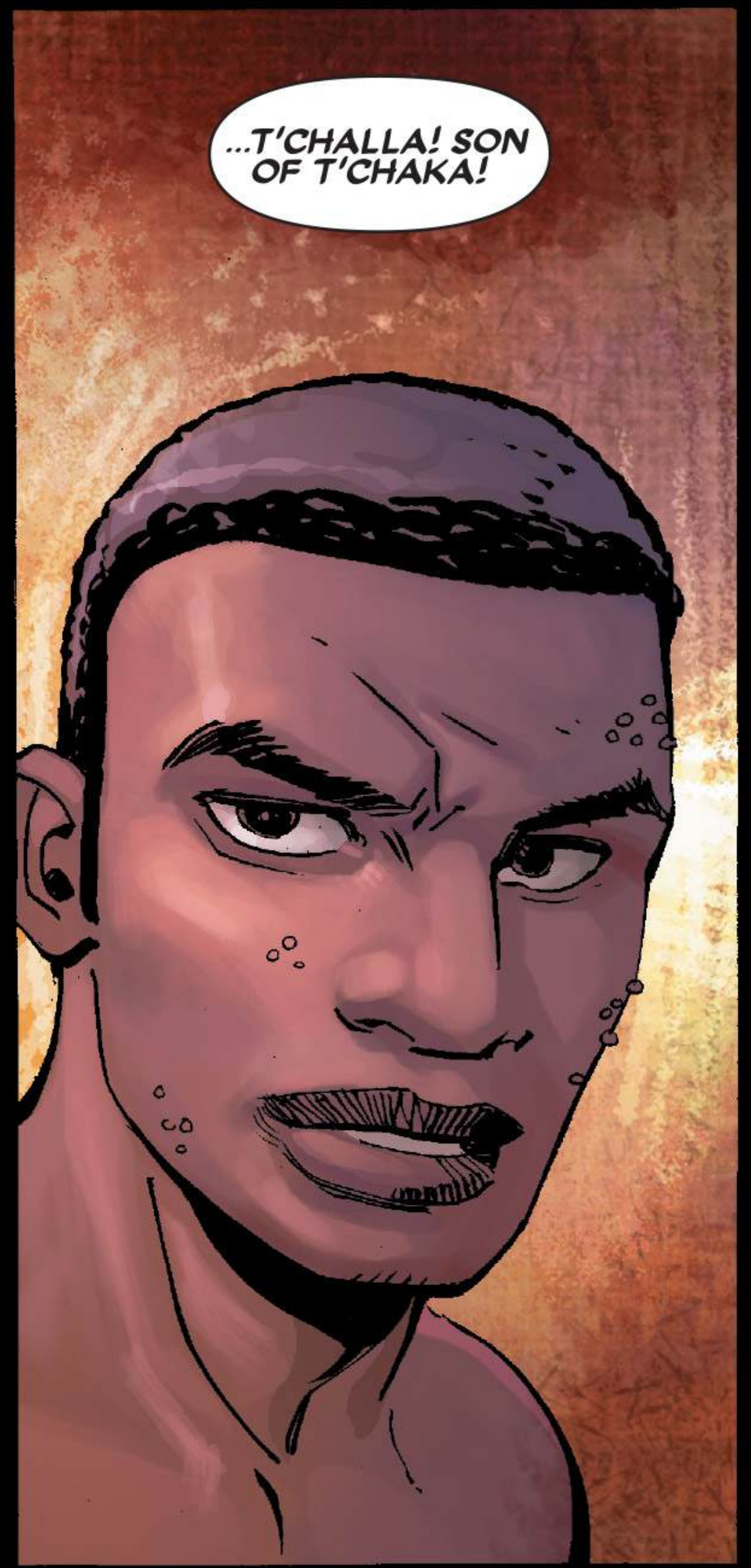
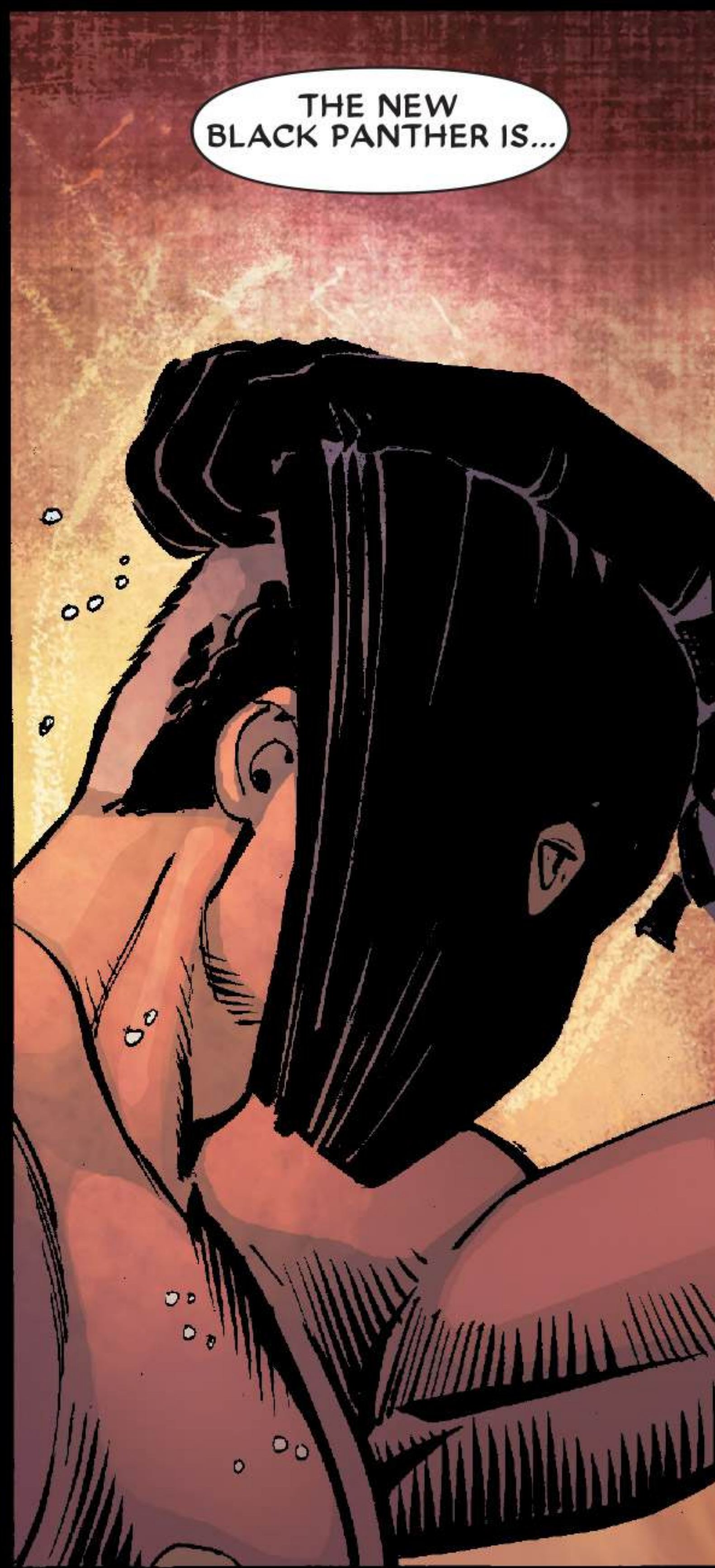








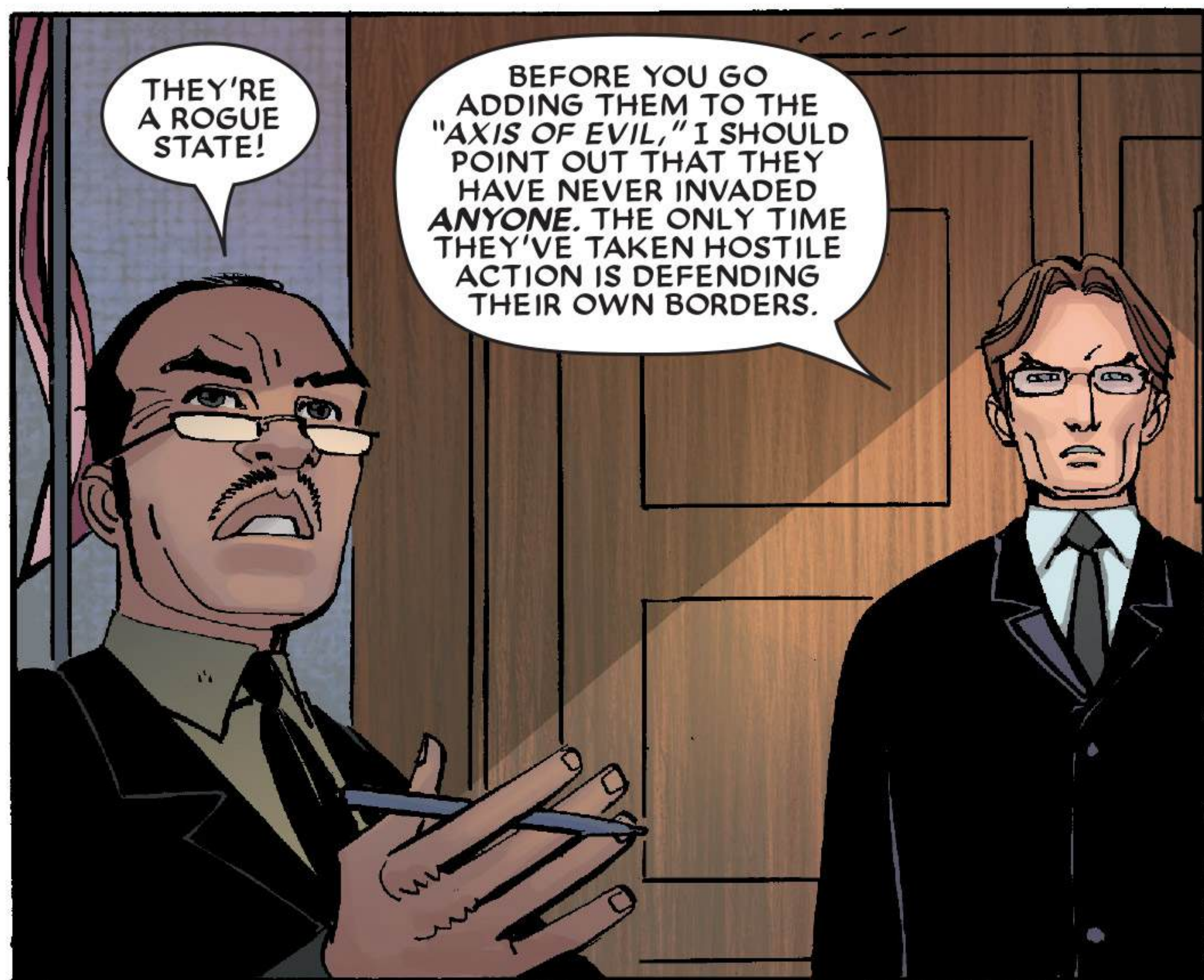






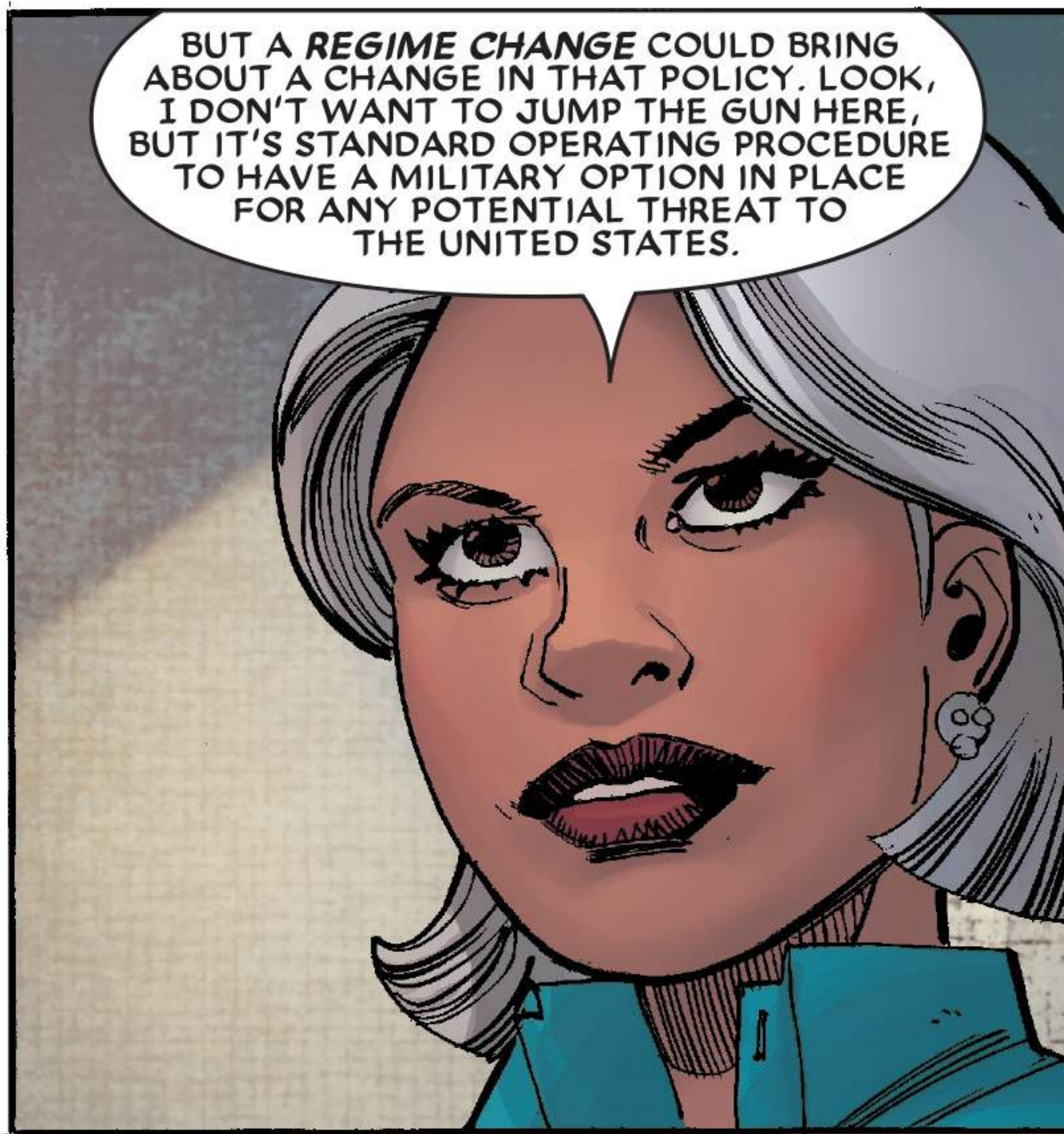


...SO WHAT WE'VE GOT HERE IS A HIGHLY MILITARISTIC CULTURE WITH NO TIES TO THE UNITED STATES....



THEY'RE A ROGUE STATE!

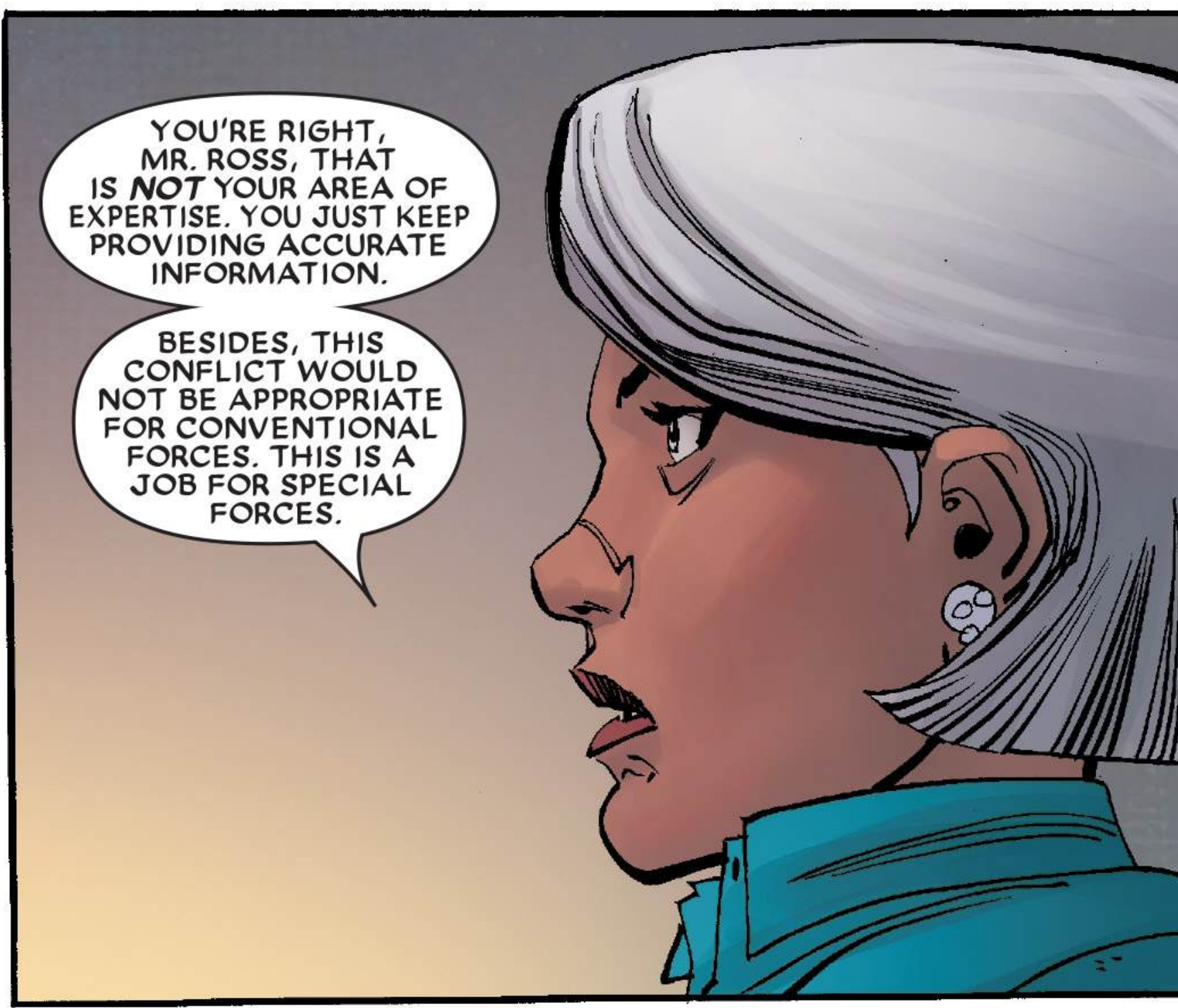
BEFORE YOU GO ADDING THEM TO THE "AXIS OF EVIL," I SHOULD POINT OUT THAT THEY HAVE NEVER INVADED ANYONE. THE ONLY TIME THEY'VE TAKEN HOSTILE ACTION IS DEFENDING THEIR OWN BORDERS.



BUT A *REGIME CHANGE* COULD BRING ABOUT A CHANGE IN THAT POLICY. LOOK, I DON'T WANT TO JUMP THE GUN HERE, BUT IT'S STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE TO HAVE A MILITARY OPTION IN PLACE FOR ANY POTENTIAL THREAT TO THE UNITED STATES.



I CERTAINLY DON'T WANT TO SPEAK IN THE PLACE OF THE RECENTLY DEPARTED GENERAL, BUT WITH OUR MILITARY FORCES STRETCHED ALL OVER THE MIDDLE EAST, DO WE EVEN HAVE THE RESOURCES--?

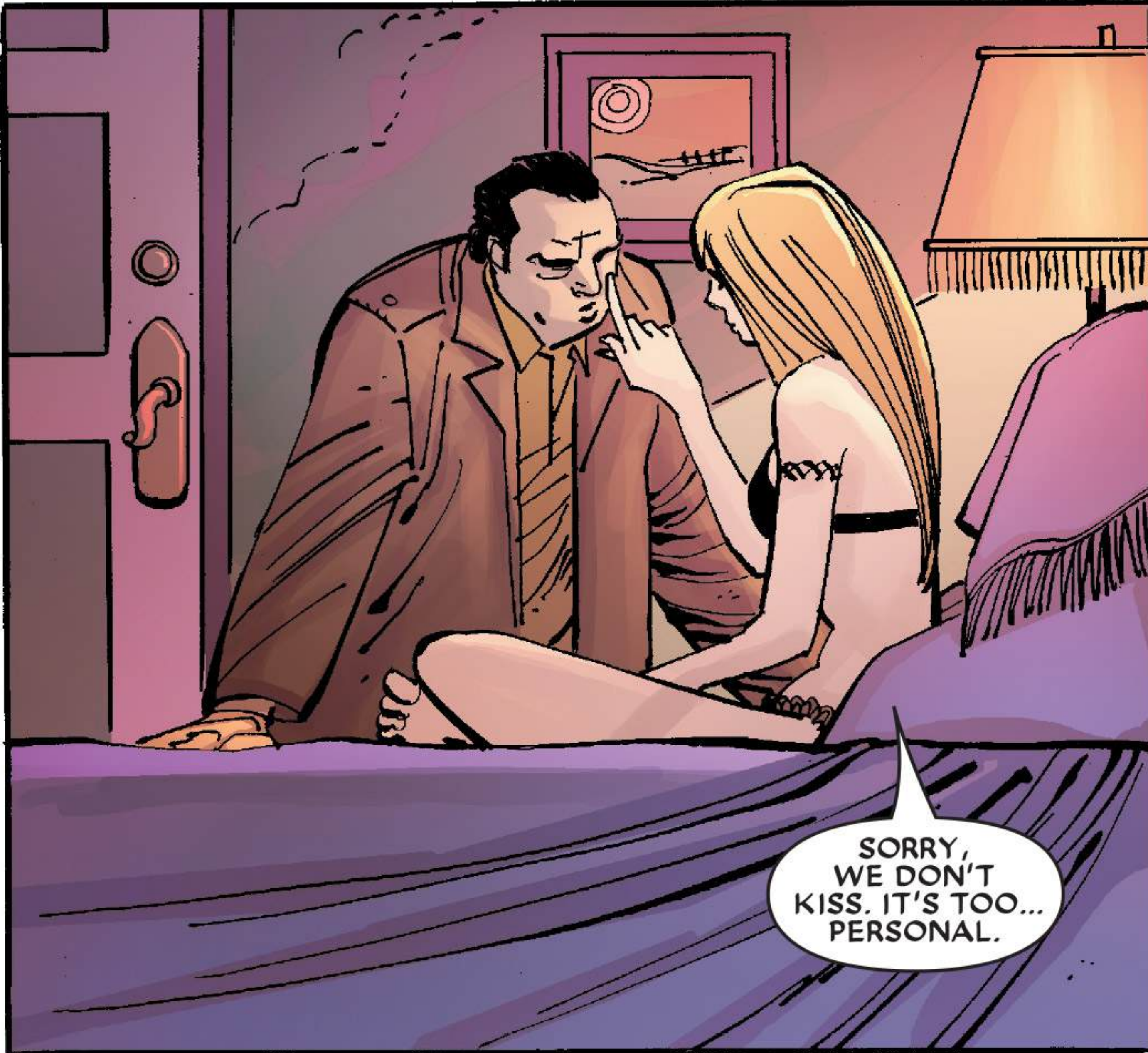


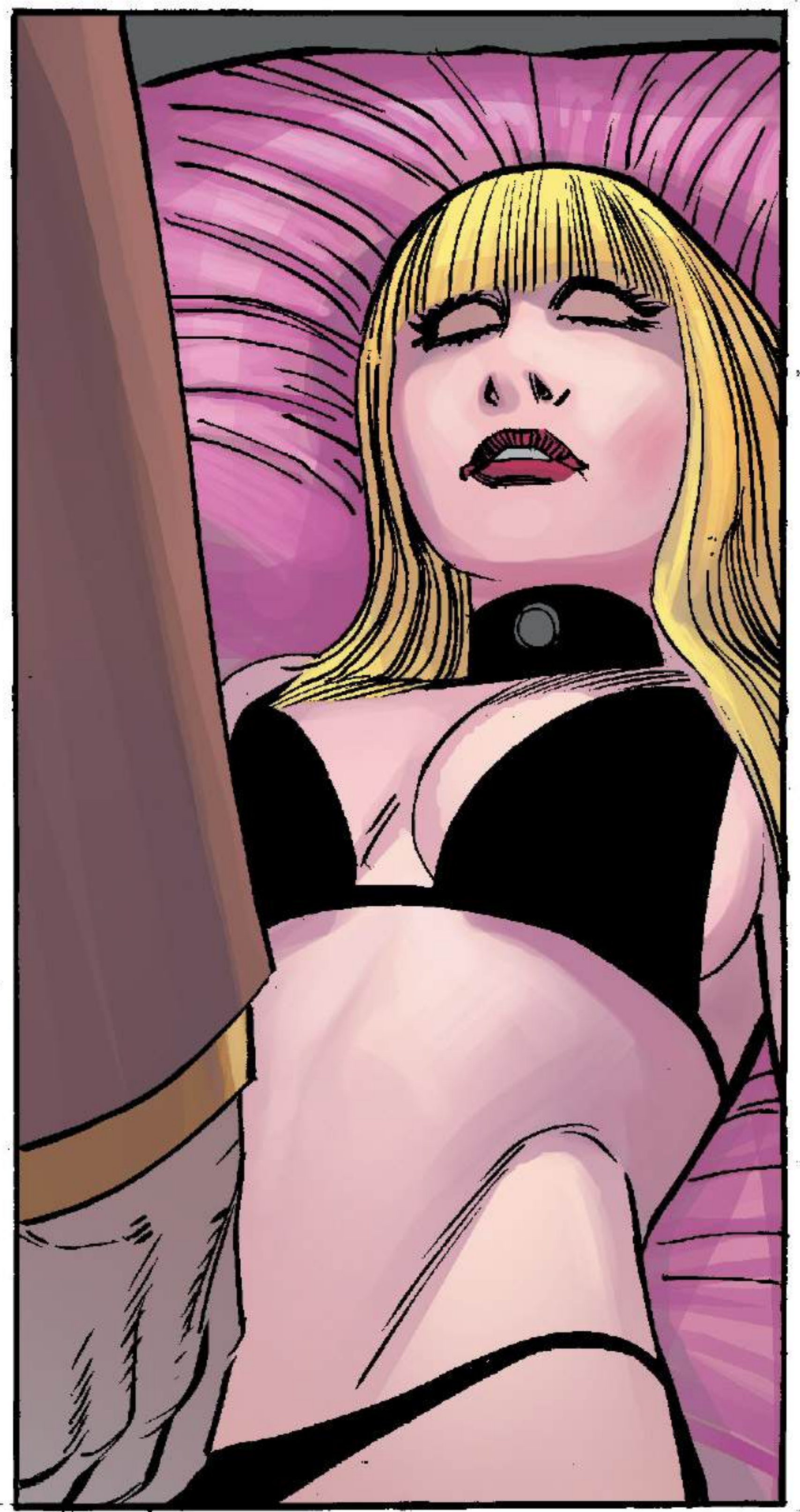
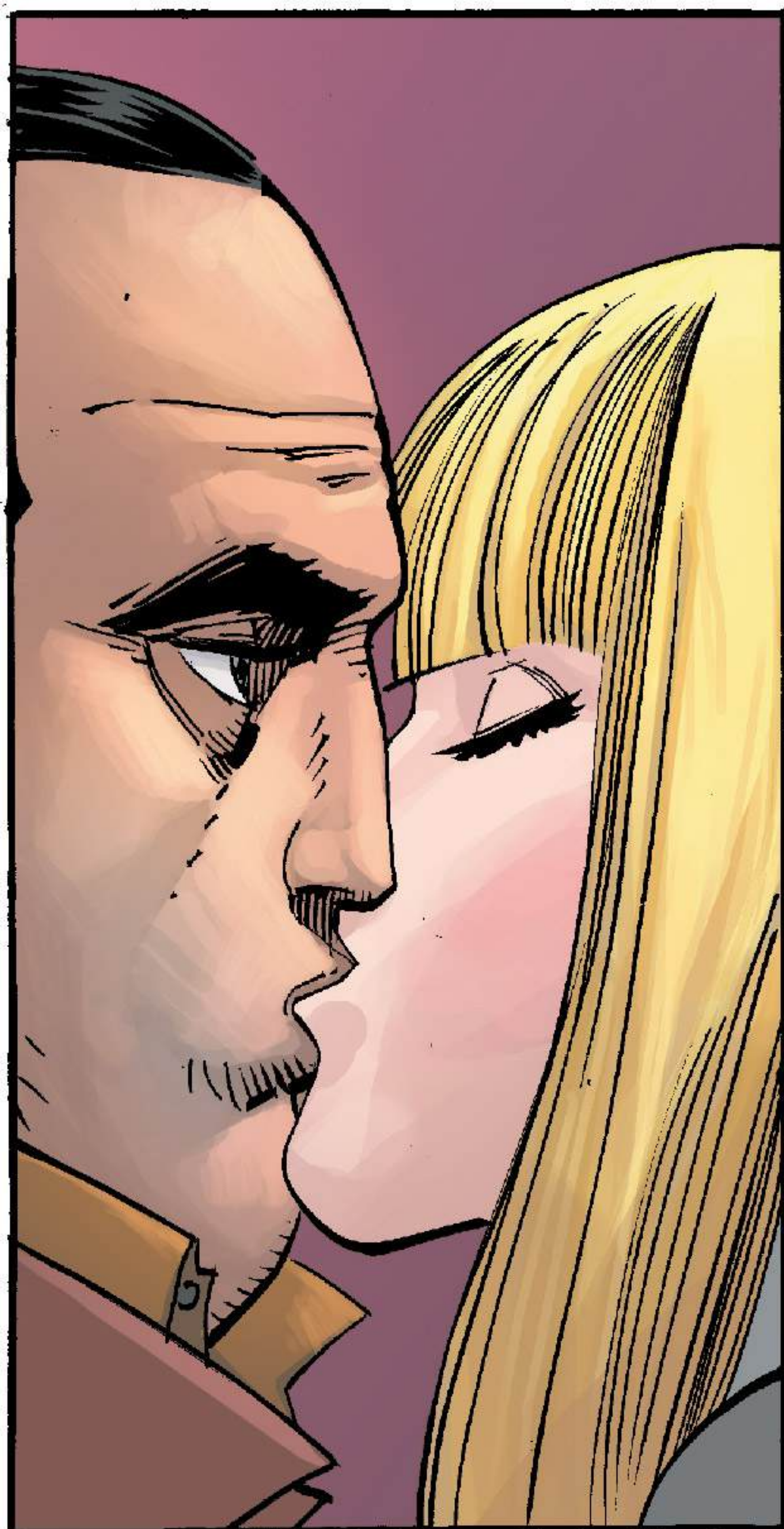
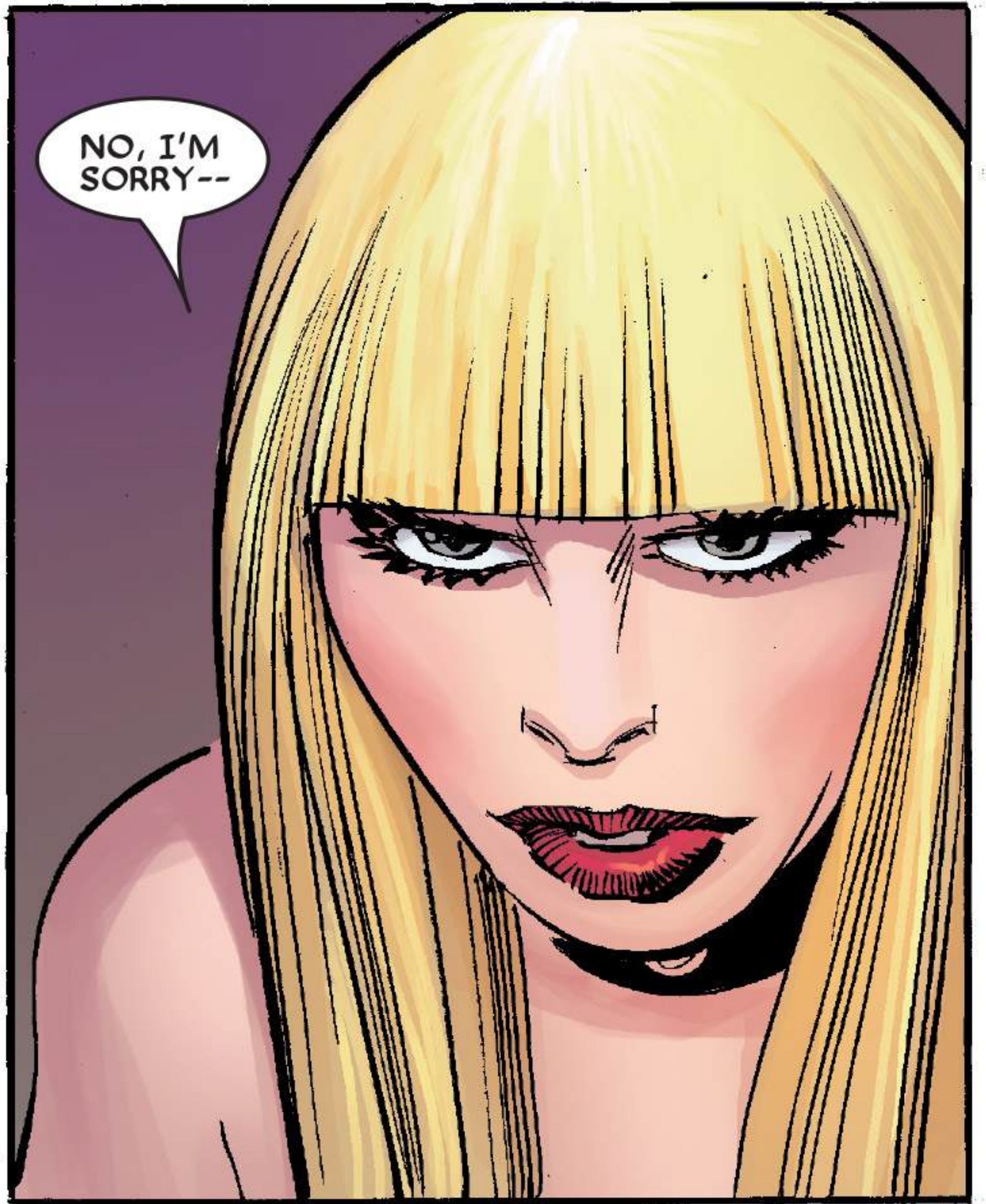
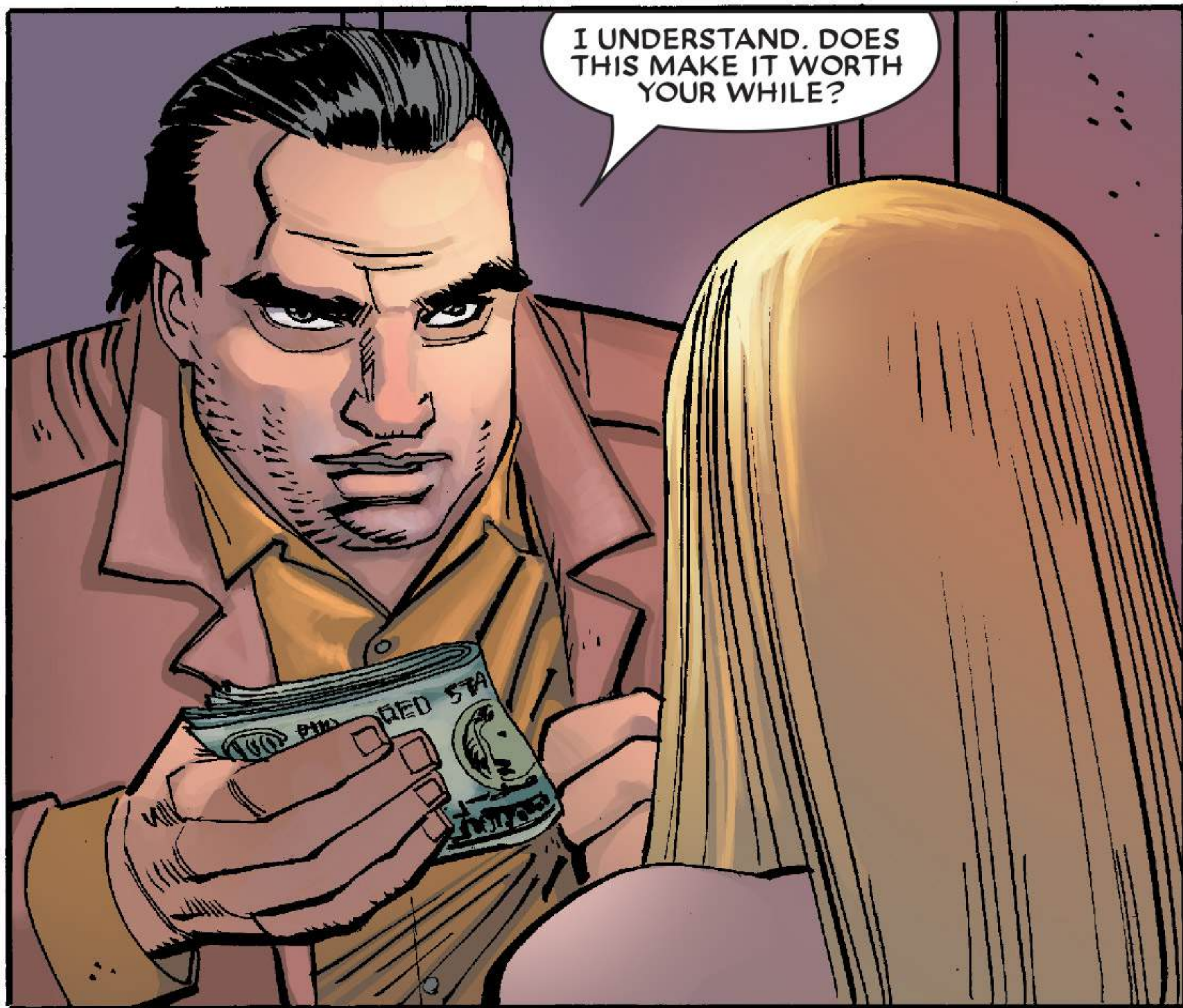
YOU'RE RIGHT, MR. ROSS, THAT IS *NOT* YOUR AREA OF EXPERTISE. YOU JUST KEEP PROVIDING ACCURATE INFORMATION.

BESIDES, THIS CONFLICT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR CONVENTIONAL FORCES. THIS IS A JOB FOR SPECIAL FORCES.



VERY SPECIAL FORCES...



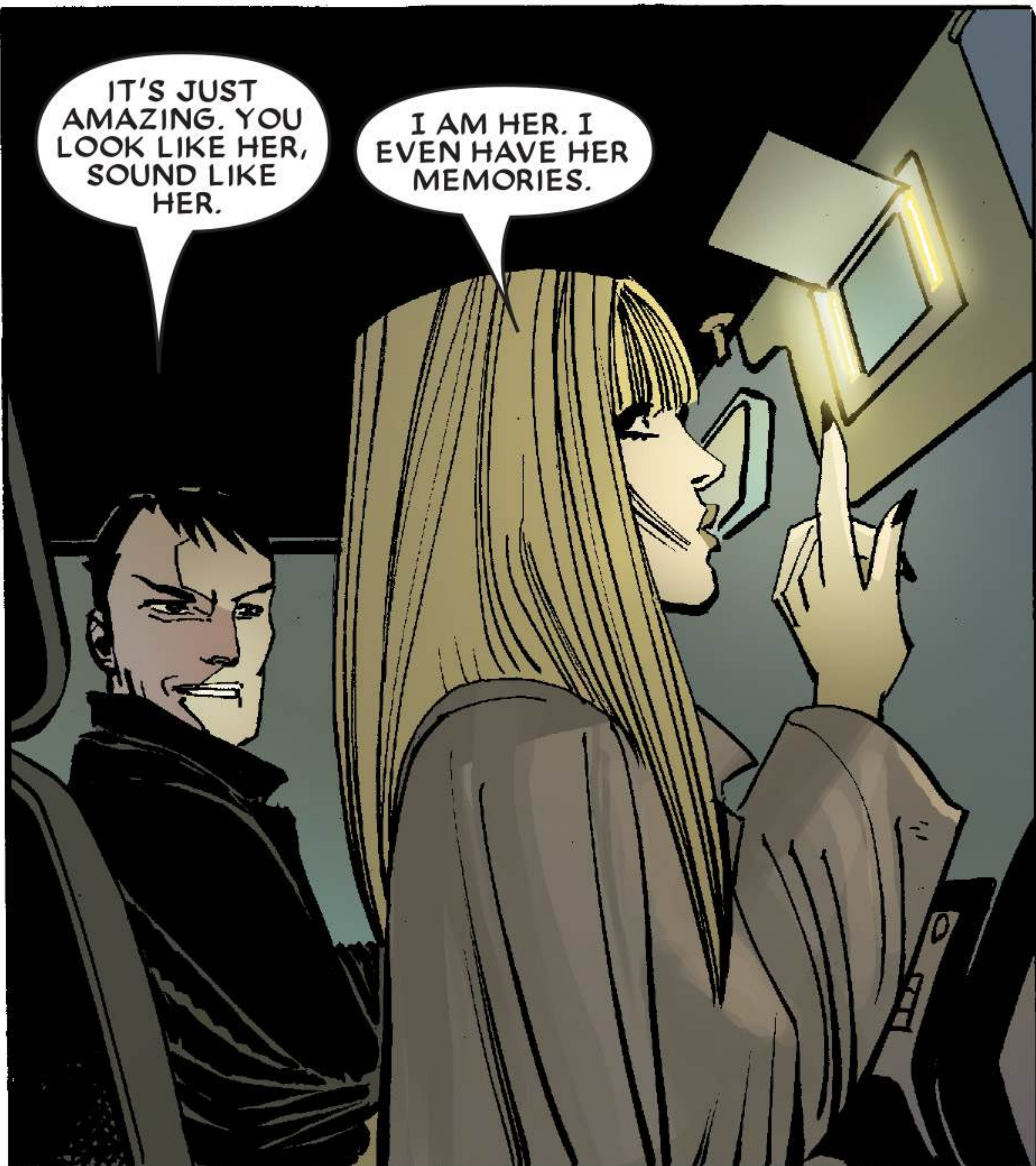






NEED A LIFT?

SURE, SAILOR.



IT'S JUST AMAZING. YOU LOOK LIKE HER, SOUND LIKE HER.

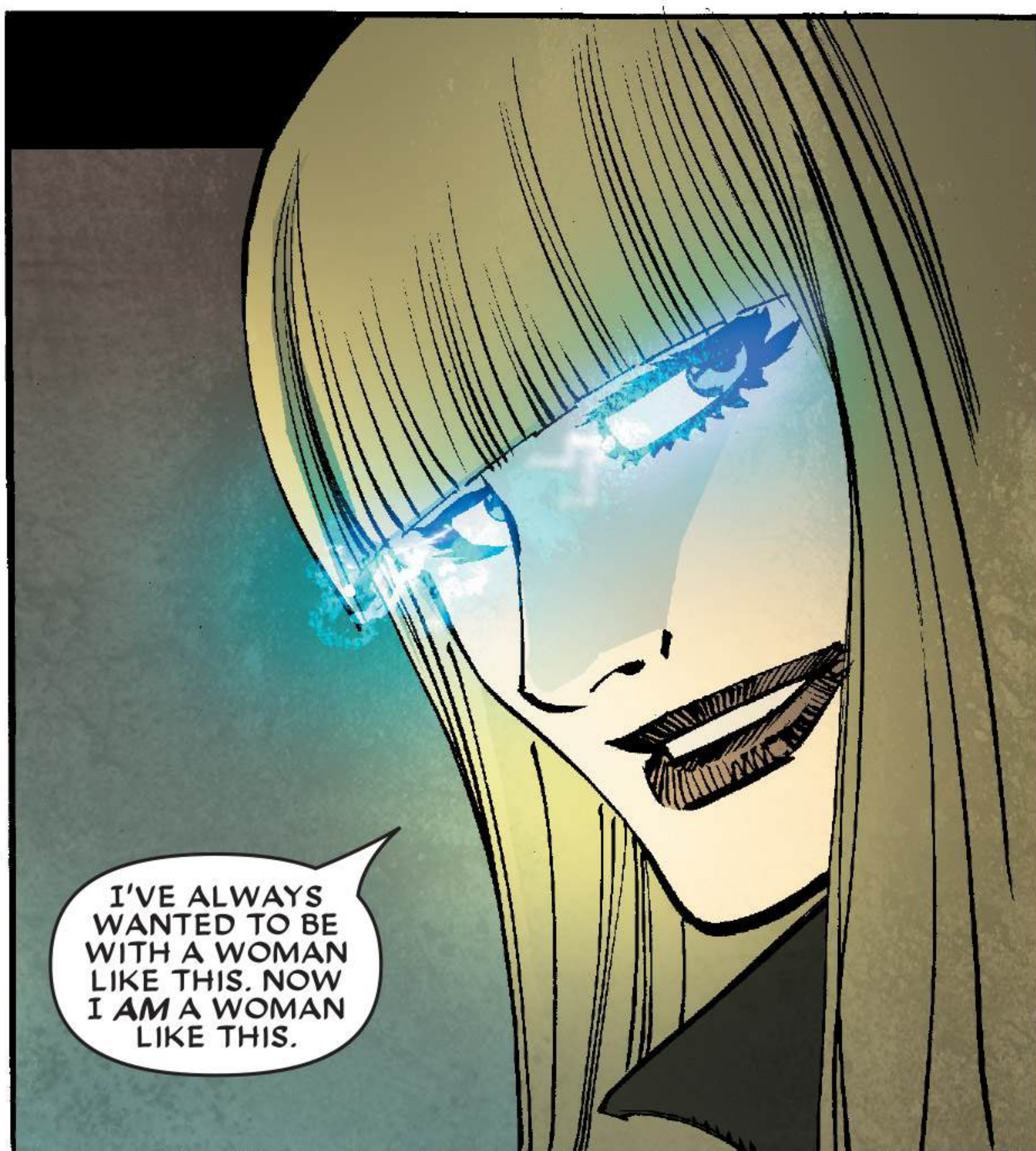
I AM HER. I EVEN HAVE HER MEMORIES.



YOU REALLY ARE A CANNIBAL.

I PREFER THE TERM--

WHATEVER. SO NOW YOU'RE A WOMAN. HOW DOES IT FEEL?



I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO BE WITH A WOMAN LIKE THIS. NOW I AM A WOMAN LIKE THIS.



AND I THOUGHT MY HAND WAS DANGEROUS.

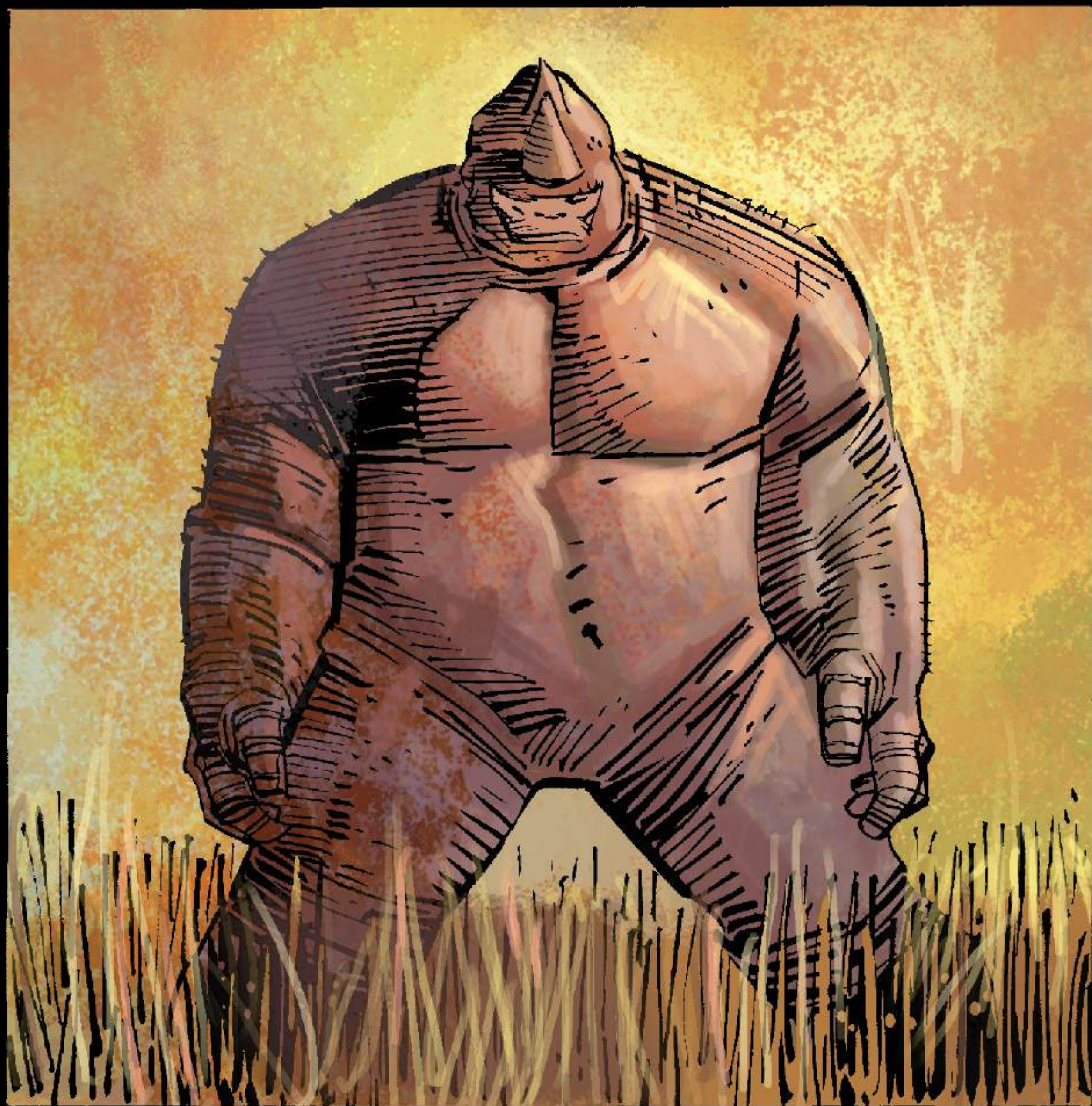
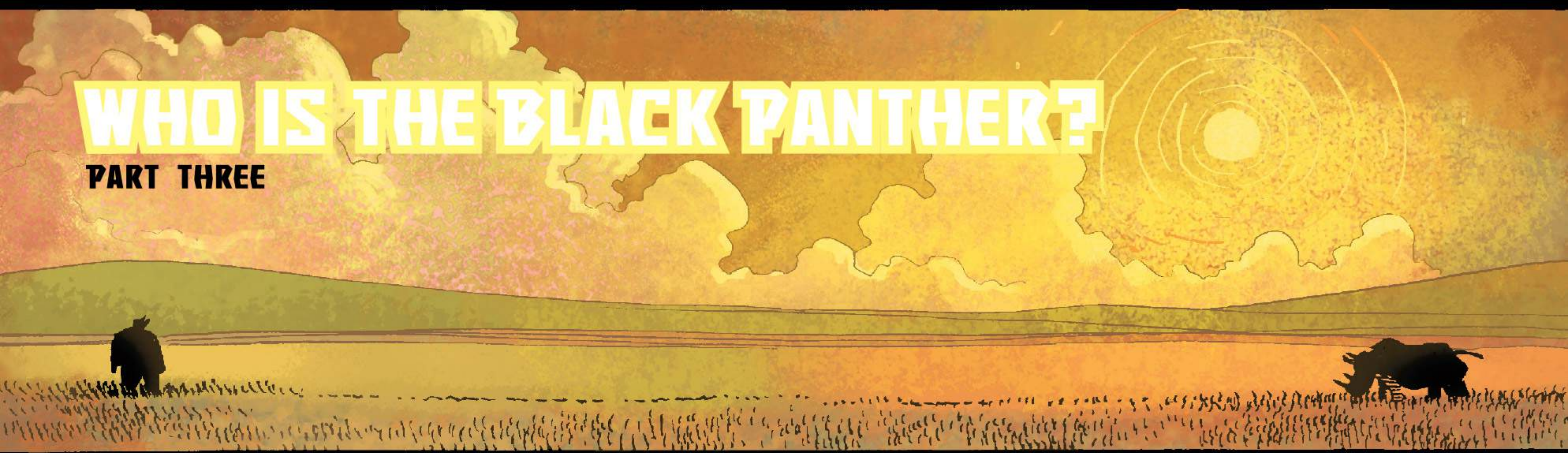
BETWEEN THE TWO OF US, THE BLACK PANTHER DOESN'T STAND A CHANCE!

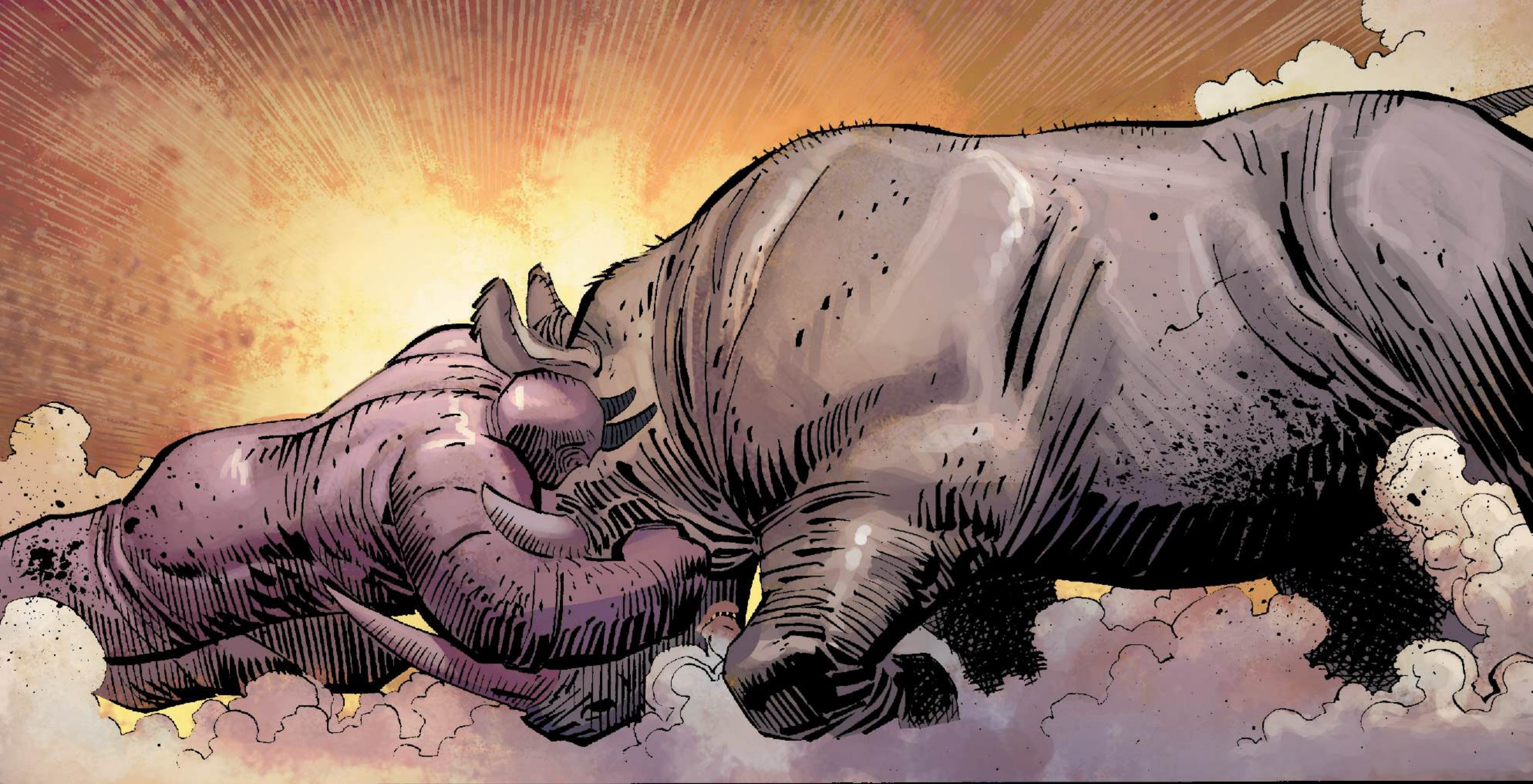


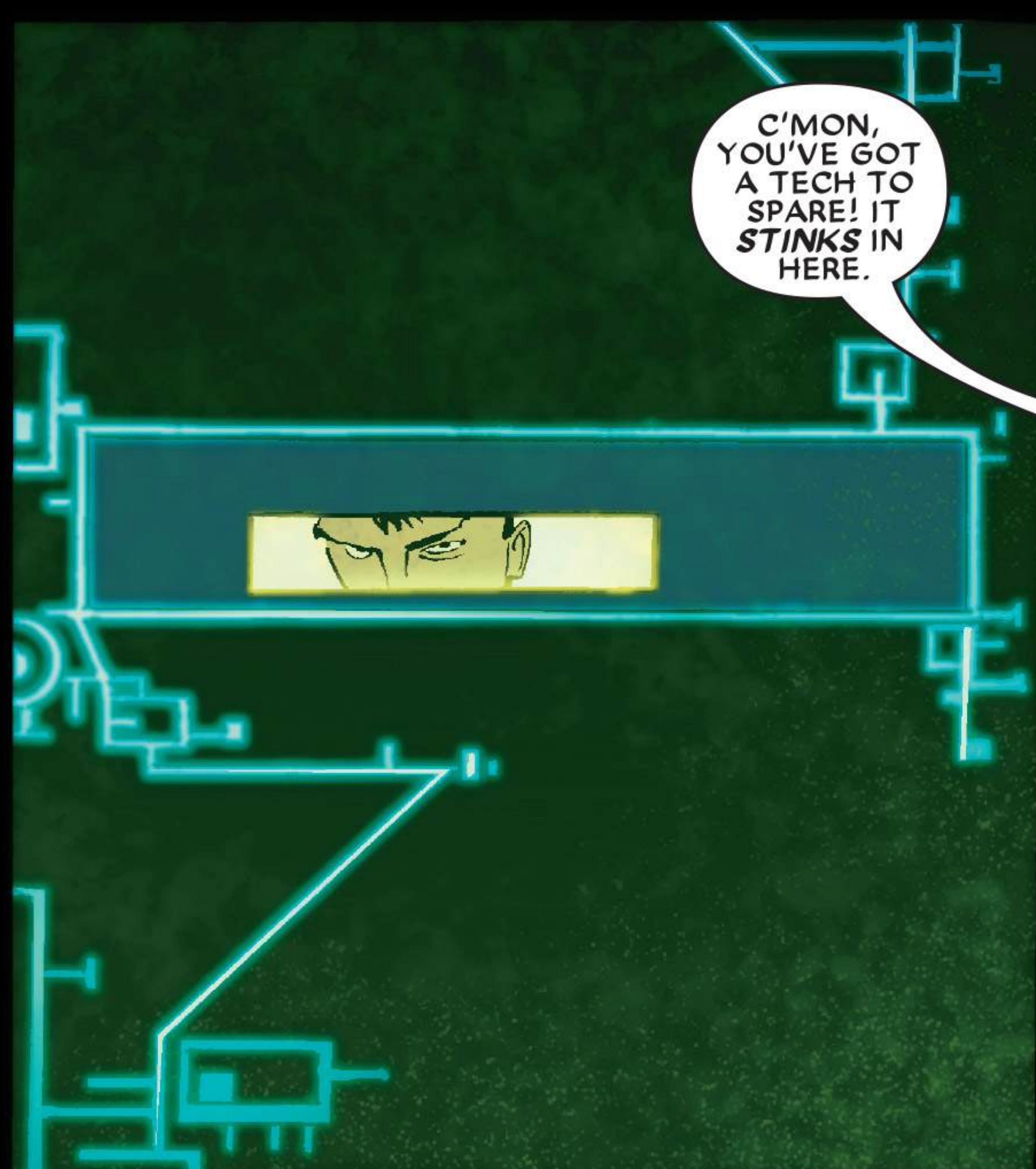
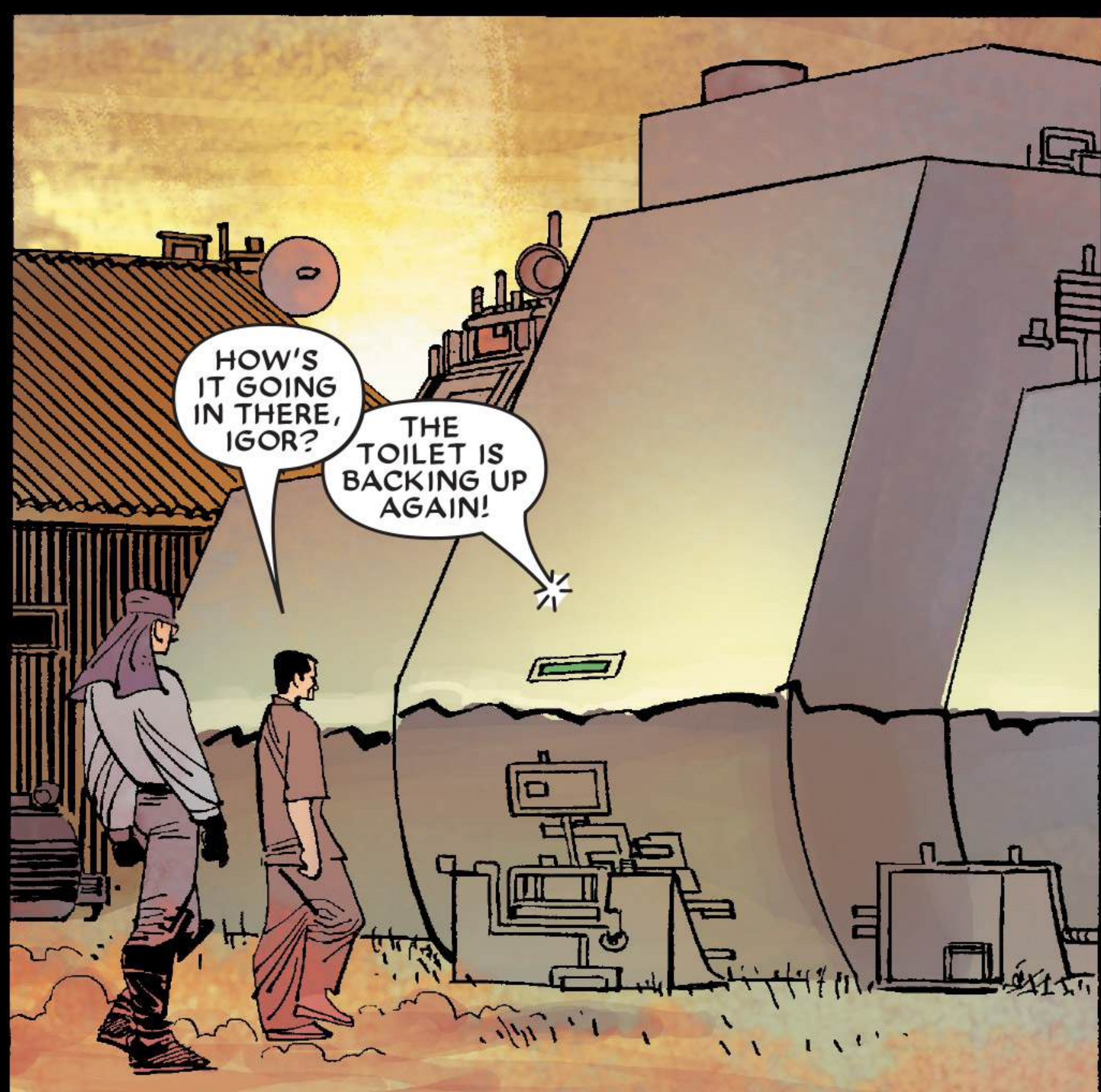
CH
White

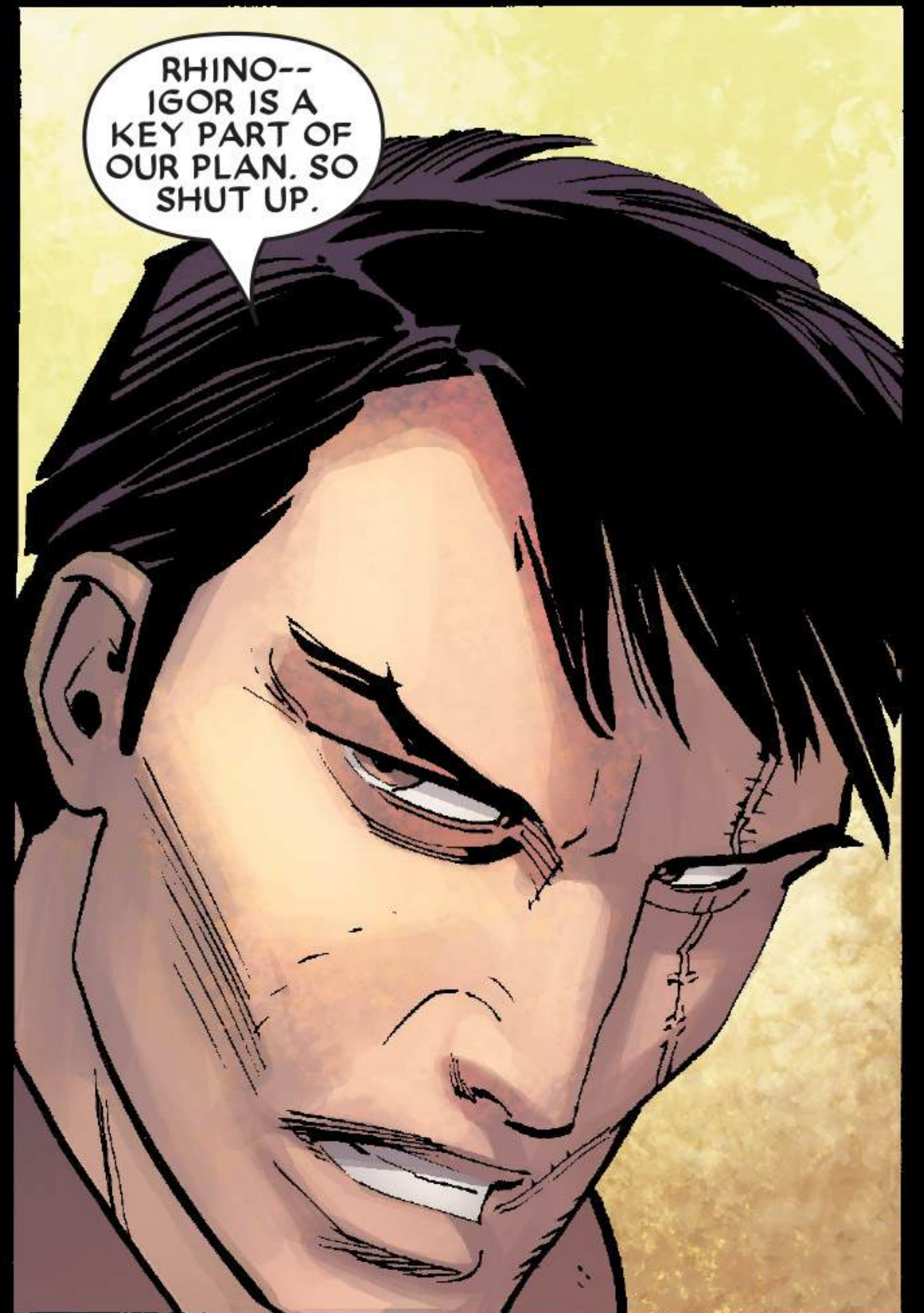
WHO IS THE BLACK PANTHER?

PART THREE











"THE BILDERBERG CONFERENCE, SOME YEARS AGO. AN ANNUAL MEETING OF THE WORLD'S TOP ECONOMIC POWERS. THE KIND OF GET-TOGETHER THAT GIVES CONSPIRACY THEORISTS PALPITATIONS."



"I WAS THERE TO KILL A MAN."

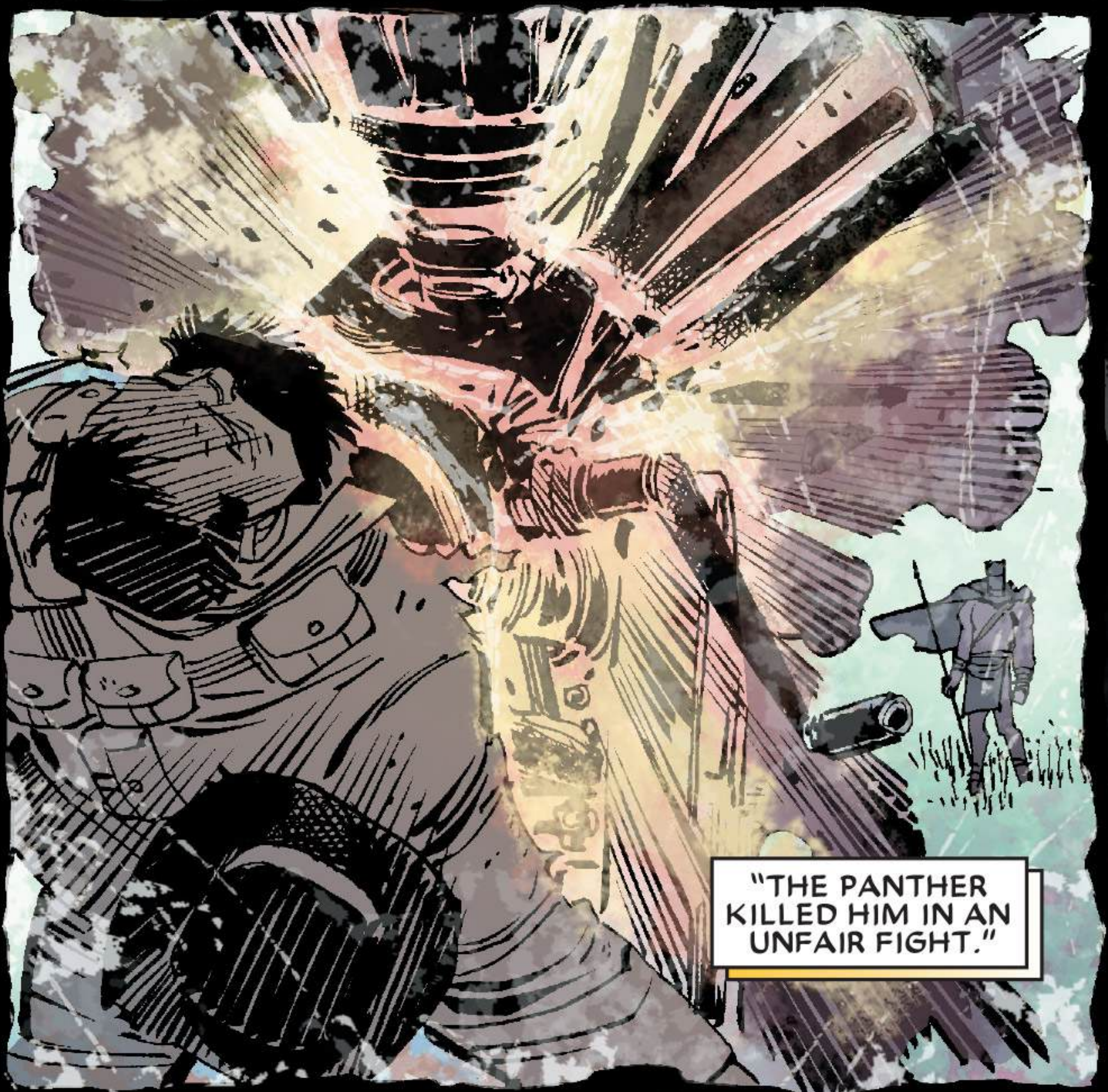


ON A JOB?

I WAS HIRED, YES, BUT IT WAS ALSO PERSONAL.



"I COME FROM A MILITARY FAMILY. MY GREAT-GREAT-GREAT GRANDFATHER WAS ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF SOUTH AFRICA."



"THE PANTHER KILLED HIM IN AN UNFAIR FIGHT."



WHEN I WAS HIRED TO ASSASSINATE HIM, IT WAS BOTH A PLEASURE AND AN HONOR TO ACCEPT THE ASSIGNMENT.

PLUS, I KNEW THIS JOB WOULD MAKE MY REPUTATION INTERNATIONALLY-- IT WAS A GLOBAL ECONOMIC CONFERENCE. PLENTY OF POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS THERE.



"THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES AREN'T NORMALLY INVITED TO THE REAL MEETINGS LIKE THIS. THAT'S WHAT THE UN IS FOR--A PLACE FOR THE POWERLESS TO WHINE ABOUT THE WHITE MAN."

"BUT THEY INVITED WAKANDA TO THE BIG BOYS' TABLE BECAUSE EVERYONE WANTED A CRACK AT THEIR RESOURCES. UNTOUCHED PETROLEUM DEPOSITS. MEDICAL CURES UNKNOWN IN THE WESTERN WORLD. AND **VIBRANIUM**...THE RAREST, MOST VALUABLE MINERAL ON EARTH."



YOUR MAJESTY, WE'LL PAY WHATEVER PRICE YOU SET FOR YOUR GOODS.

THEY ARE NOT FOR SALE. UNTIL THE SPIRITUAL ADVANCEMENT OF THE WEST CATCHES UP TO THEIR TECHNOLOGICAL PROWESS, IT WOULD BE IRRESPONSIBLE TO SHARE OUR SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES WITH YOU.

WHAT?

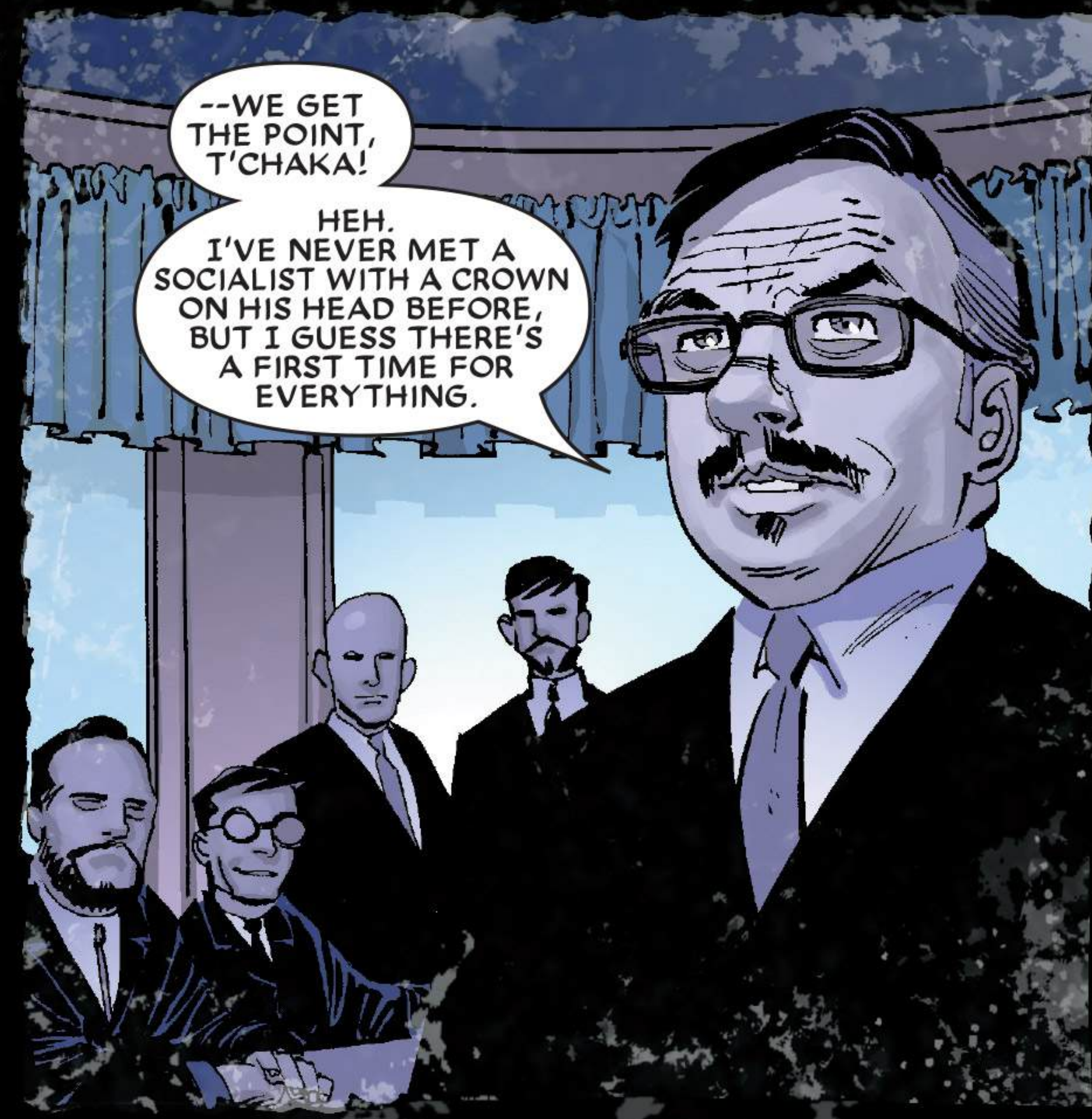
ARE YOU CALLING EVERYONE HERE IRRESPONSIBLE CHILDREN?

NO. MORE LIKE SULLEN TEENAGERS WHO FEEL MORE MATURE THAN THEIR BEHAVIOR WARRANTS. THE FACT THAT EVERY CONVERSATION HERE IS FRAMED IN TERMS OF PROFIT AND POWER SAYS IT ALL.





YOU COULD HAVE MADE HALF THESE BREAKTHROUGHS YOURSELF, BUT THERE'S TOO MUCH MONEY TO BE MADE IN MISERY. WHY CURE A DISEASE WHEN PEOPLE PAY FOR MEDICINE? WHY PROVIDE CHEAP ENERGY WHEN--



--WE GET THE POINT, T'CHAKA!

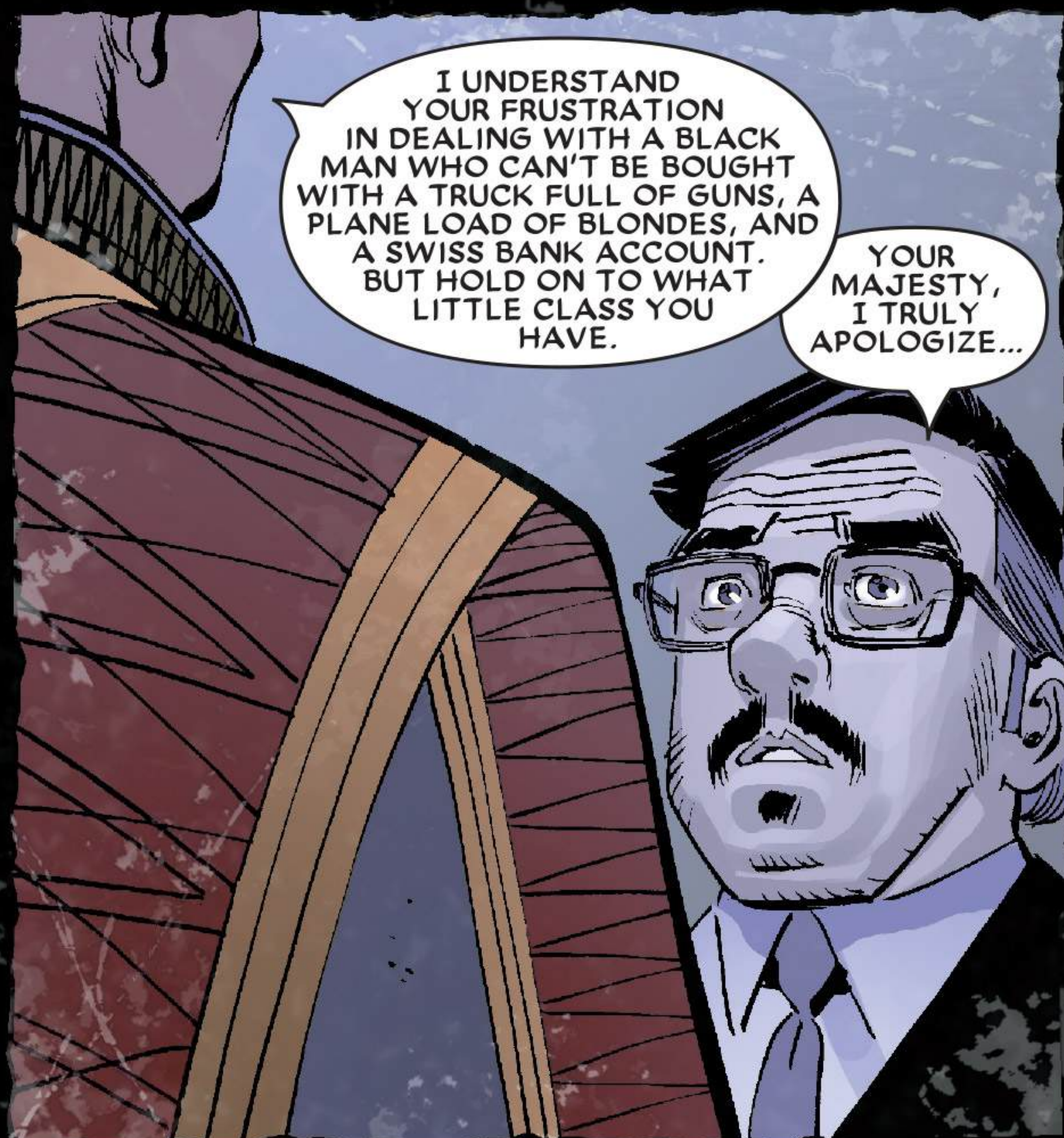
HEH. I'VE NEVER MET A SOCIALIST WITH A CROWN ON HIS HEAD BEFORE, BUT I GUESS THERE'S A FIRST TIME FOR EVERYTHING.



WHO GAVE YOU PERMISSION TO USE MY FIRST NAME?

I...

I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T MEAN TO OFFEND--



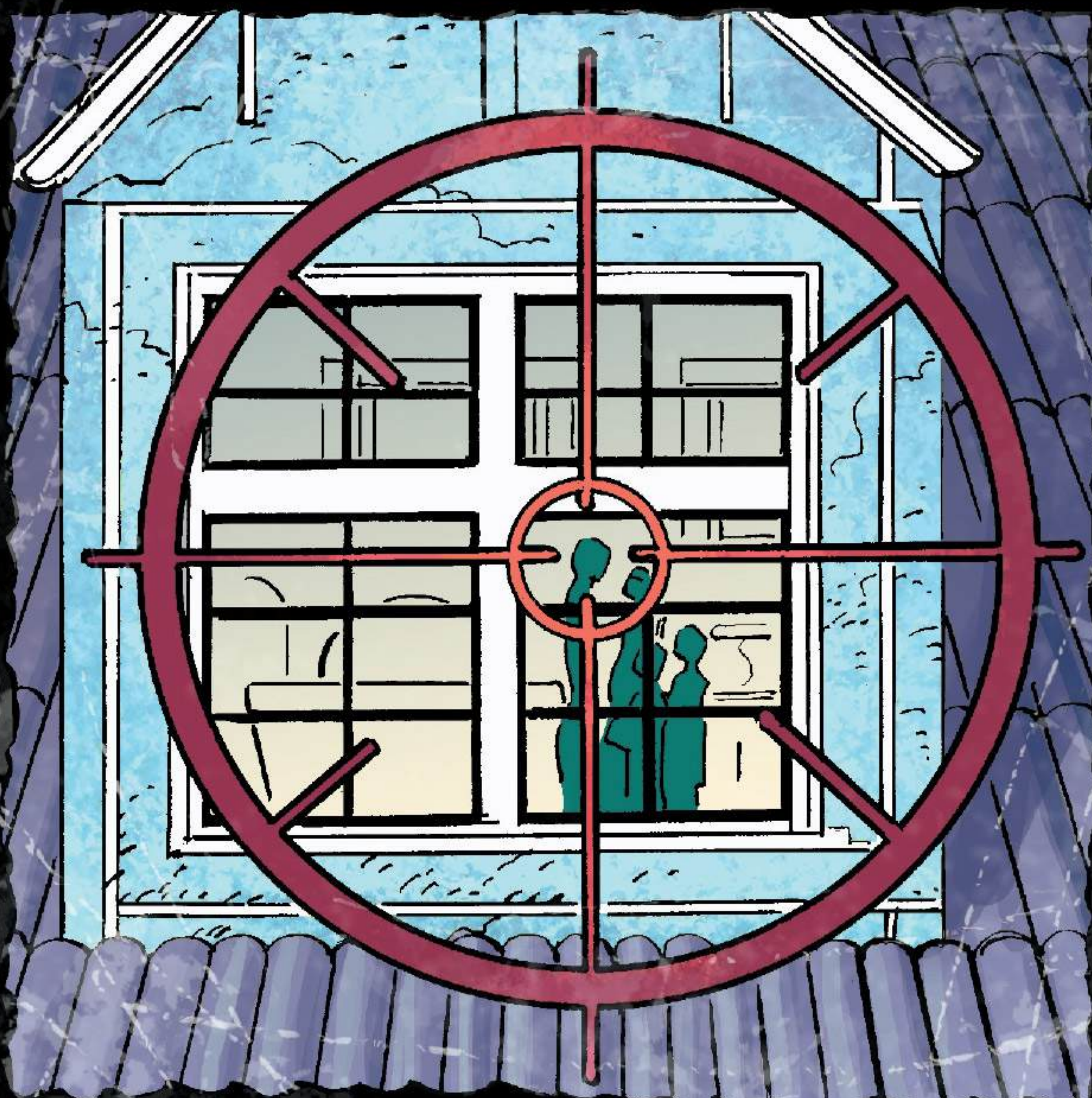
I UNDERSTAND YOUR FRUSTRATION IN DEALING WITH A BLACK MAN WHO CAN'T BE BOUGHT WITH A TRUCK FULL OF GUNS, A PLANE LOAD OF BLONDES, AND A SWISS BANK ACCOUNT. BUT HOLD ON TO WHAT LITTLE CLASS YOU HAVE.

YOUR MAJESTY, I TRULY APOLOGIZE...



THIS MEETING IS OVER.

"ONCE IT WAS CLEAR
THERE WAS NO DEAL
TO BE MADE, MY
JOB KICKED IN.



"THIS WAS NOT
AN EASY GIG. A
MONTH BEFORE
THE CONFERENCE,
THEY SHUT THE
HOTEL DOWN FOR
SECURITY PURPOSES.
LAID OFF ANY
EMPLOYEE THAT
HAD WORKED
THERE LESS
THAN A YEAR."





WHY DO WE
HAVE TO LEAVE
IMMEDIATELY,
DADDY?

YOU
SAID WE
COULD GO
SKIING!



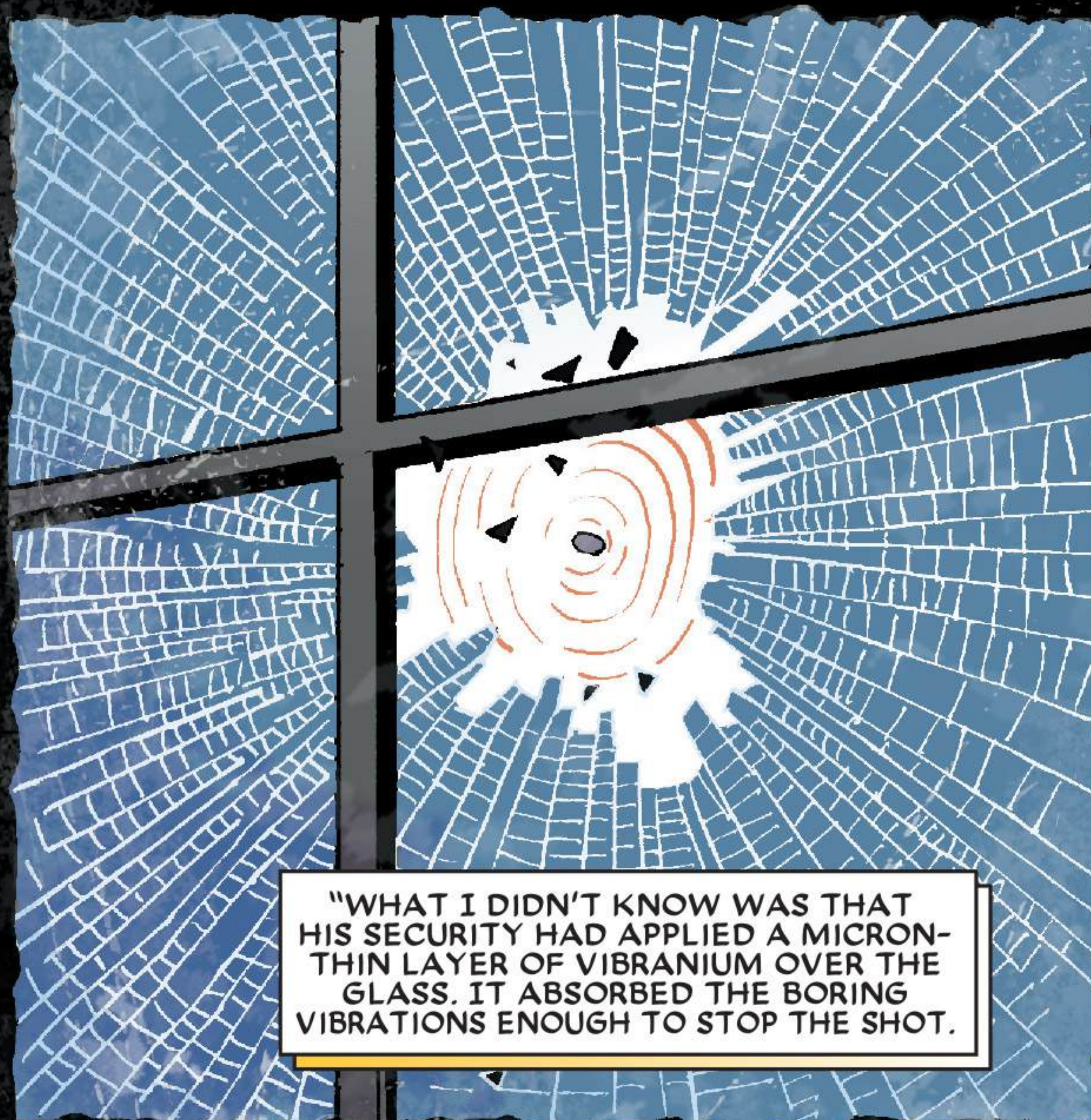
THIS IS
WHY WE HAVE
TO LEAVE. THE
CHILDREN GROW
MORE INSOLENT
WITH EACH
BREATH OF
EUROPEAN--



KRAK!



"I KNEW THE GLASS
WAS BULLETPROOF,
BUT THAT DIDN'T
WORRY ME. THE
ARMOR-PIERCING
SHELL WOULD
BLOW RIGHT
THROUGH THAT.



"WHAT I DIDN'T KNOW WAS THAT
HIS SECURITY HAD APPLIED A MICRON-
THIN LAYER OF VIBRANIUM OVER THE
GLASS. IT ABSORBED THE BORING
VIBRATIONS ENOUGH TO STOP THE SHOT.



"WE HAD SECONDS TO RECOVER
BEFORE WE LOST THE WINDOW
OF OPPORTUNITY ENTIRELY, SO
TO SPEAK. TIME FOR PLAN B.



"I HAD BEEN WAITING BENEATH THE FLOORBOARDS FOR A WEEK. I WAS GETTING TEN MILLION DOLLARS TO KILL SOMEONE I'D DO FOR FREE. THERE WAS NO WAY I WOULD FAIL."



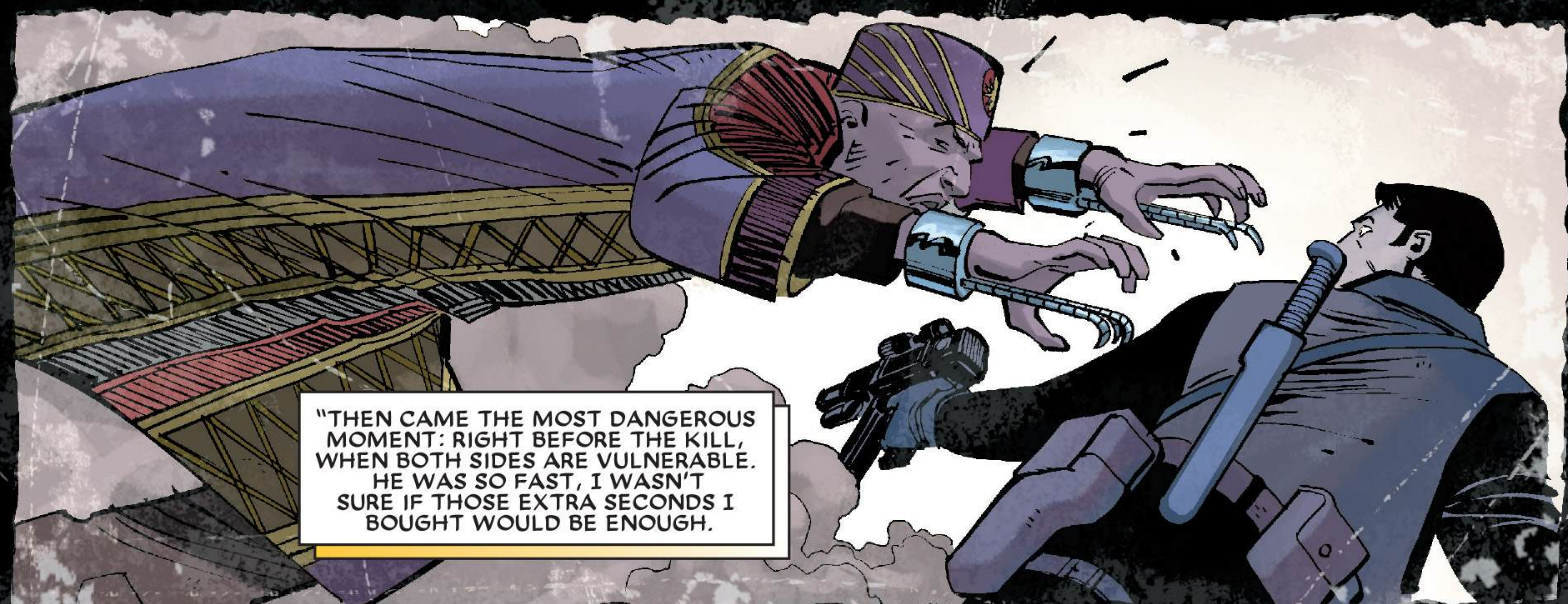
"I GOT LUCKY RIGHT OFF THE BAT. OBVIOUSLY, THE POINT OF AN ENTRANCE LIKE THAT IS TO CREATE AS MUCH CHAOS AS POSSIBLE TO KEEP AN EDGE AGAINST AN OPPONENT THIS DANGEROUS. BUT WHEN THAT PIECE OF DEBRIS TOOK OUT THE SECOND IN LINE TO THE THRONE, IT, WELL..."



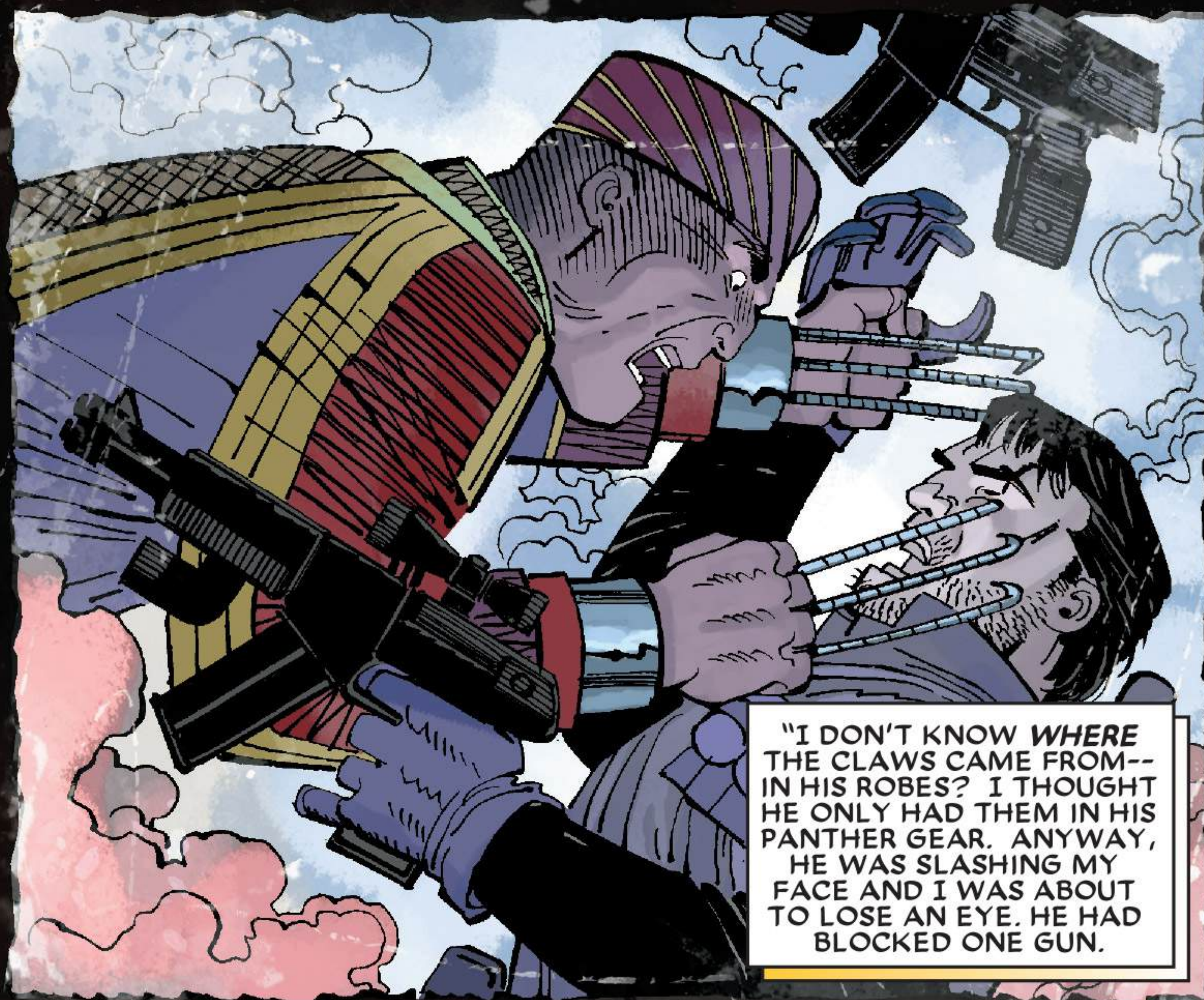
"IT REALLY DISTRACTED THE PANTHER."



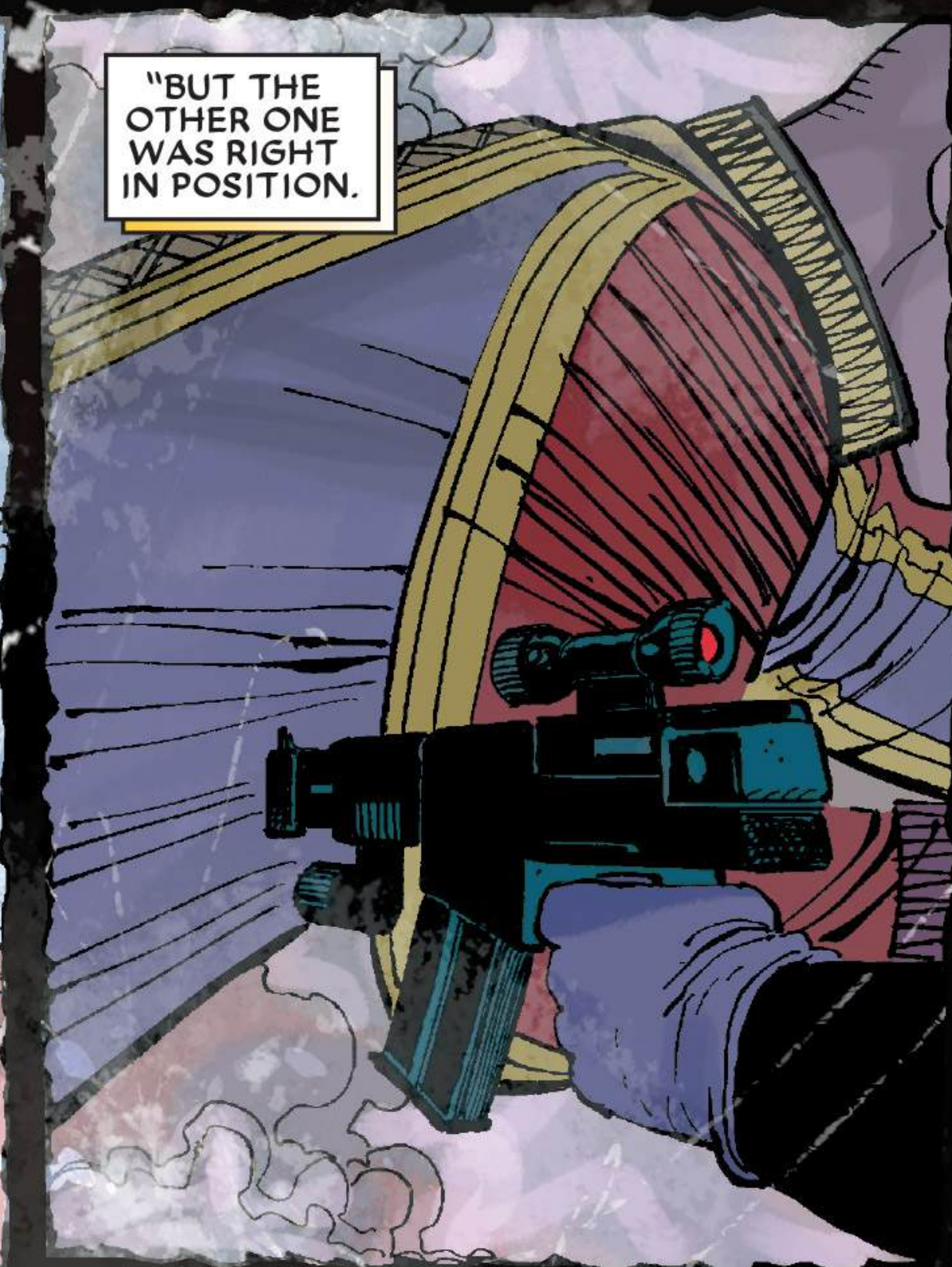
"KILLING THE ENTIRE FAMILY WASN'T PART OF THE COMMISSION, BUT THROWING IN THOSE LITTLE EXTRAS CAN REALLY ENDEAR YOU TO AN EMPLOYER."



"THEN CAME THE MOST DANGEROUS MOMENT: RIGHT BEFORE THE KILL, WHEN BOTH SIDES ARE VULNERABLE. HE WAS SO FAST, I WASN'T SURE IF THOSE EXTRA SECONDS I BOUGHT WOULD BE ENOUGH."



"I DON'T KNOW **WHERE** THE CLAWS CAME FROM-- IN HIS ROBES? I THOUGHT HE ONLY HAD THEM IN HIS PANTHER GEAR. ANYWAY, HE WAS SLASHING MY FACE AND I WAS ABOUT TO LOSE AN EYE. HE HAD BLOCKED ONE GUN.



"BUT THE OTHER ONE WAS RIGHT IN POSITION.



"MISSION COMPLETED.



"NOW THE TRICK WAS TO STAY ALIVE.



"NOW I HAD THE OPTION OF REALLY CLEANING UP THIS SITUATION.



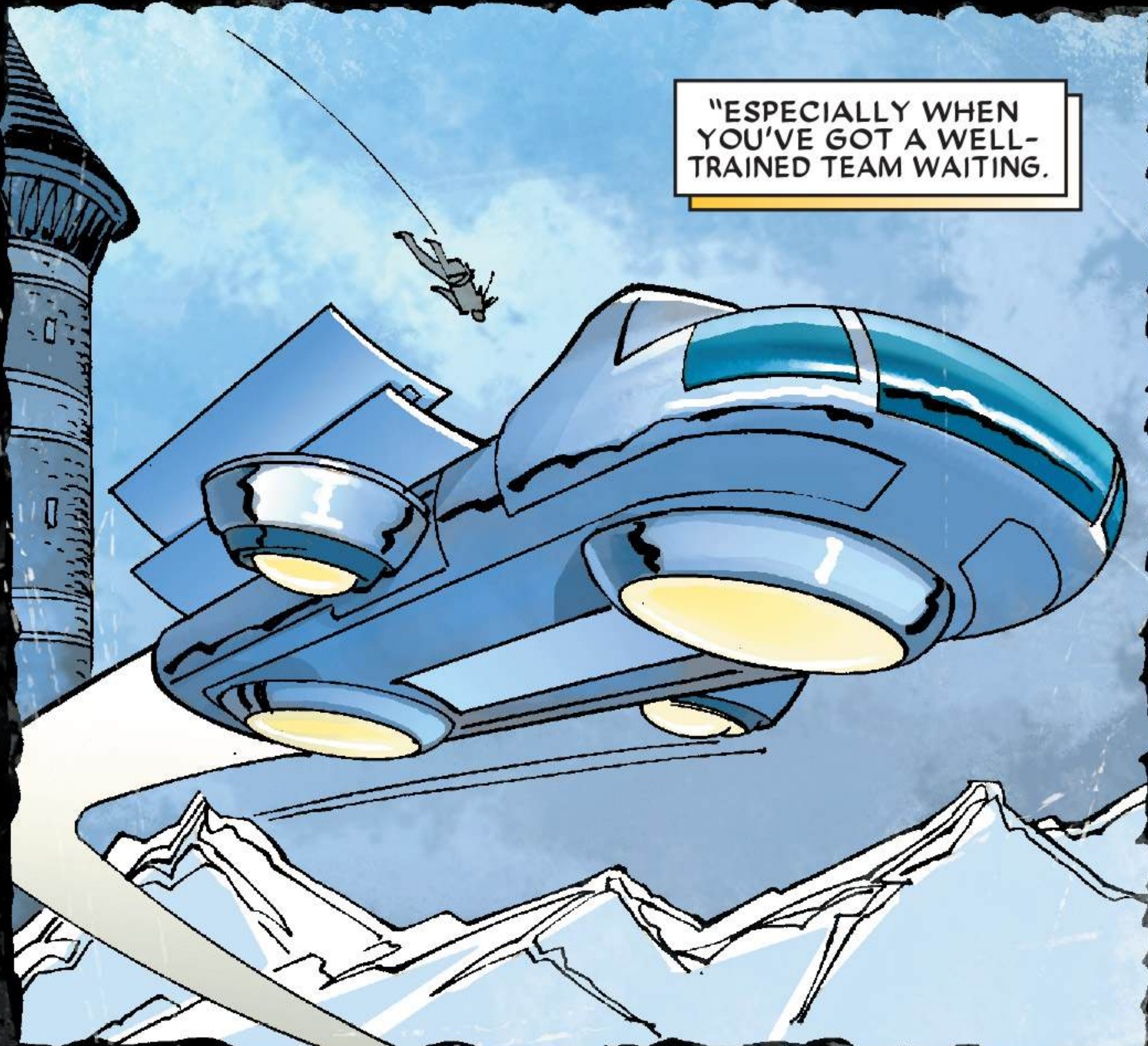
"THE KID SHOT ME. WITH MY OWN GUN. CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT?"



"I KNEW I HAD TO GET OUT OF THERE BEFORE DEFEAT WAS SNATCHED FROM THE JAWS OF VICTORY, SO TO SPEAK."



"THE KID WAS A GOOD ENOUGH SHOT TO MAKE JUMPING OUT OF A SEVENTH FLOOR WINDOW THE BETTER OPTION."



"ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU'VE GOT A WELL-TRAINED TEAM WAITING."





"ALTHOUGH I DIDN'T KILL THE ENTIRE BLOODLINE, MY SPONSORS WERE GRATEFUL ENOUGH TO BRING ME HOME AND HIDE ME FROM THE ENDLESS SEARCHING BY WAKANDAN SECURITY FORCES OVER THE NEXT DECADE OR SO."



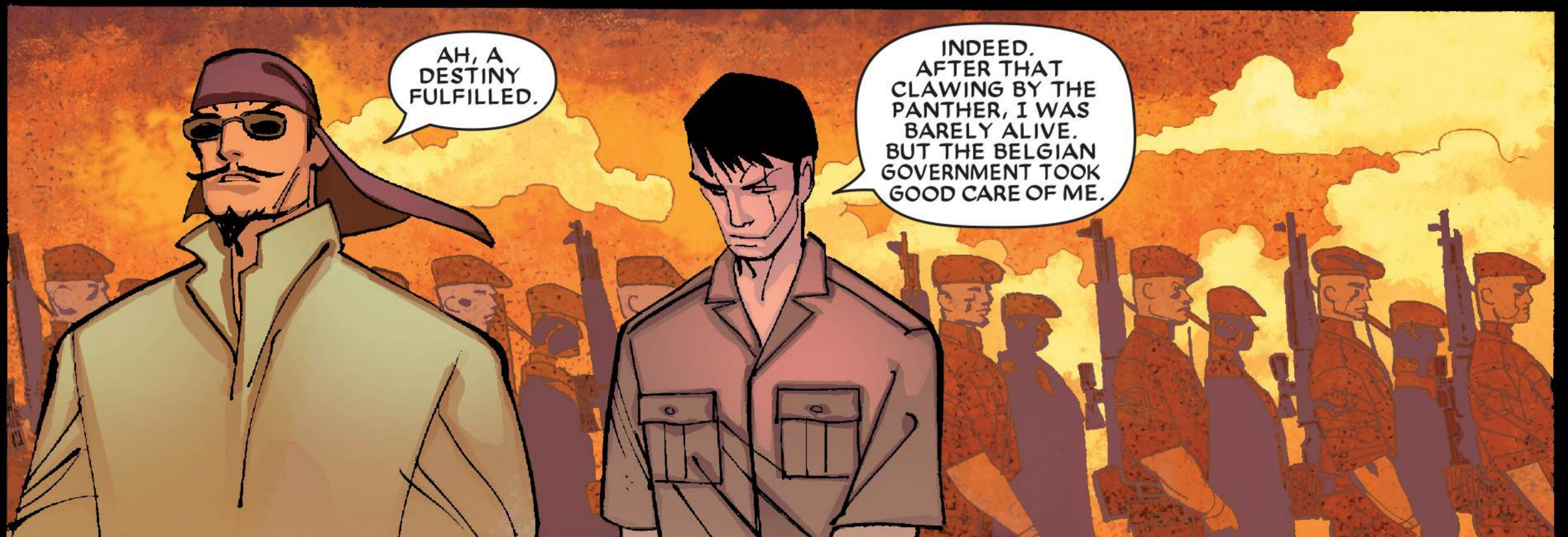
HOLD ON, YOU STILL HAD SUPPORTERS IN SOUTH AFRICA EVEN AFTER ZE REGIME CHANGE?

I DIDN'T GO BACK TO SOUTH AFRICA.

BUT I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOUR ANCESTOR WAS A FOUNDING MEMBER--



"AFTER MY GREAT GRANDFATHER'S REMAINS -- WELL, REALLY JUST A BOOT WITH HIS FOOT IN IT--WERE RETURNED TO BASE CAMP, THE FAMILY RETURNED HOME TO BELGIUM."



AH, A DESTINY FULFILLED.

INDEED. AFTER THAT CLAWING BY THE PANTHER, I WAS BARELY ALIVE. BUT THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT TOOK GOOD CARE OF ME.

"MIND YOU, IT'S NOT LIKE I WAS ON THE BEACH AT CLUB MED. THEY TOOK MY HALF-DEAD CARCASS AND EXPERIMENTED ON ME FOR CLOSE TO A DECADE. THEY EVEN TOOK MY LEFT EYE--AND THEY COULD HAVE SAVED IT!

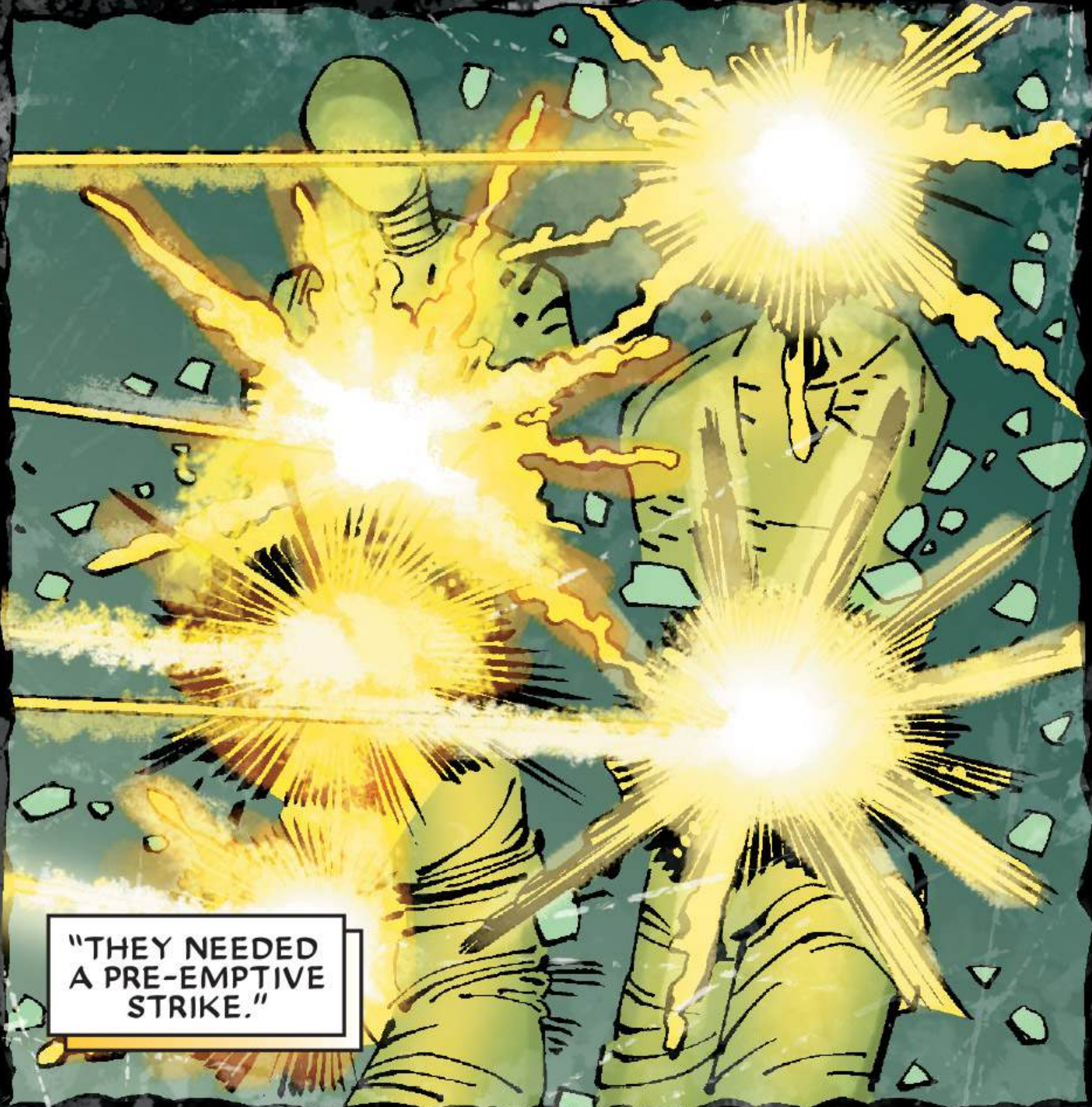


"BY THE TIME THEY WERE FINISHED WITH ME, I WAS THE WORLD'S TOP ASSASSIN AGAIN--ON THEIR TAB.

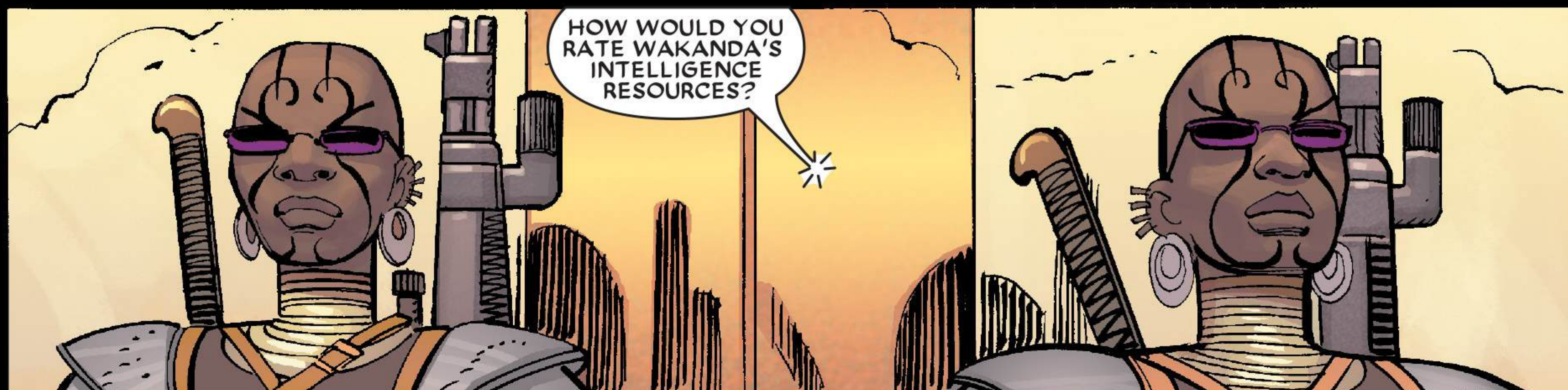
"AND MY SPONSORS WOULD PROVIDE ME WITH ALL THE RESOURCES NEEDED TO GET MY REVENGE ON THE PANTHER.



"IT WAS IN THEIR OWN BEST INTERESTS THAT I DID. THEY KNEW ONCE T'CHALLA TOOK THE THRONE, HE WOULD EVENTUALLY HUNT DOWN EVERYONE RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS FATHER'S DEATH.



"THEY NEEDED A PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE."





WE HAVE SEARCHED EVERYWHERE-- FROM LANGLEY, VIRGINIA TO JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA. NOT ONLY DID HE DISAPPEAR AFTER THE ATTACK ON YOUR FATHER, HIS PAST IS ALSO GONE.

NO ONE WANTS TO FIND YOUR FATHER'S KILLER MORE THAN I. BUT WE HAVE TO CONSIDER THE LOGICAL CONCLUSION THAT THOSE RESPONSIBLE KILLED HIM AND SCATTERED HIS ATOMS TO THE WIND.

THEN I WANT THE DNA FROM HIS ASHES TO PROVE IT!

WE WON'T GET FURTHER WITHOUT COOPERATION FROM THE WEST. WHY NOT MAKE THIS A CONDITION OF LIMITED TRADE? MAYBE THEY WOULD GIVE HIM UP IN EXCHANGE FOR THE CURE TO CANCER.



--AND ADMIT THEIR OWN COMPLICITY? I DON'T THINK SO. IF THEY CARED ABOUT THEIR PEOPLE'S HEALTH, THEY WOULDN'T SELL CIGARETTES.



HOW COULD YOU EVEN CONSIDER GIVING THOSE BARBARIANS A SCRAP FROM OUR TABLE, EVEN FOR SOMETHING AS IMPORTANT AS REVENGE? THEY'LL JUST TAKE THE GIFT AND TURN IT INTO A WEAPON, LIKE THEY DO WITH EVERYTHING ELSE.



THIS IS AN OLD DEBATE, T'CHALLA. WOULD YOU MIND SWITCHING SUBJECTS TO MORE MUNDANE MATTERS OF THE REALM? WE NEED YOU TO APPROVE A NEW SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT. IT WILL CONVERT ALGAE INTO ENOUGH ELECTRICAL POWER TO LIGHT UP THE OUTER--

THE KING WILL DECIDE WHEN A TOPIC IS DONE. DO NOT RUSH HIM.



OTHER OUTSTANDING ISSUES?

T'CHALLA, YOU NEED TO APPOINT WAKANDA'S AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS.



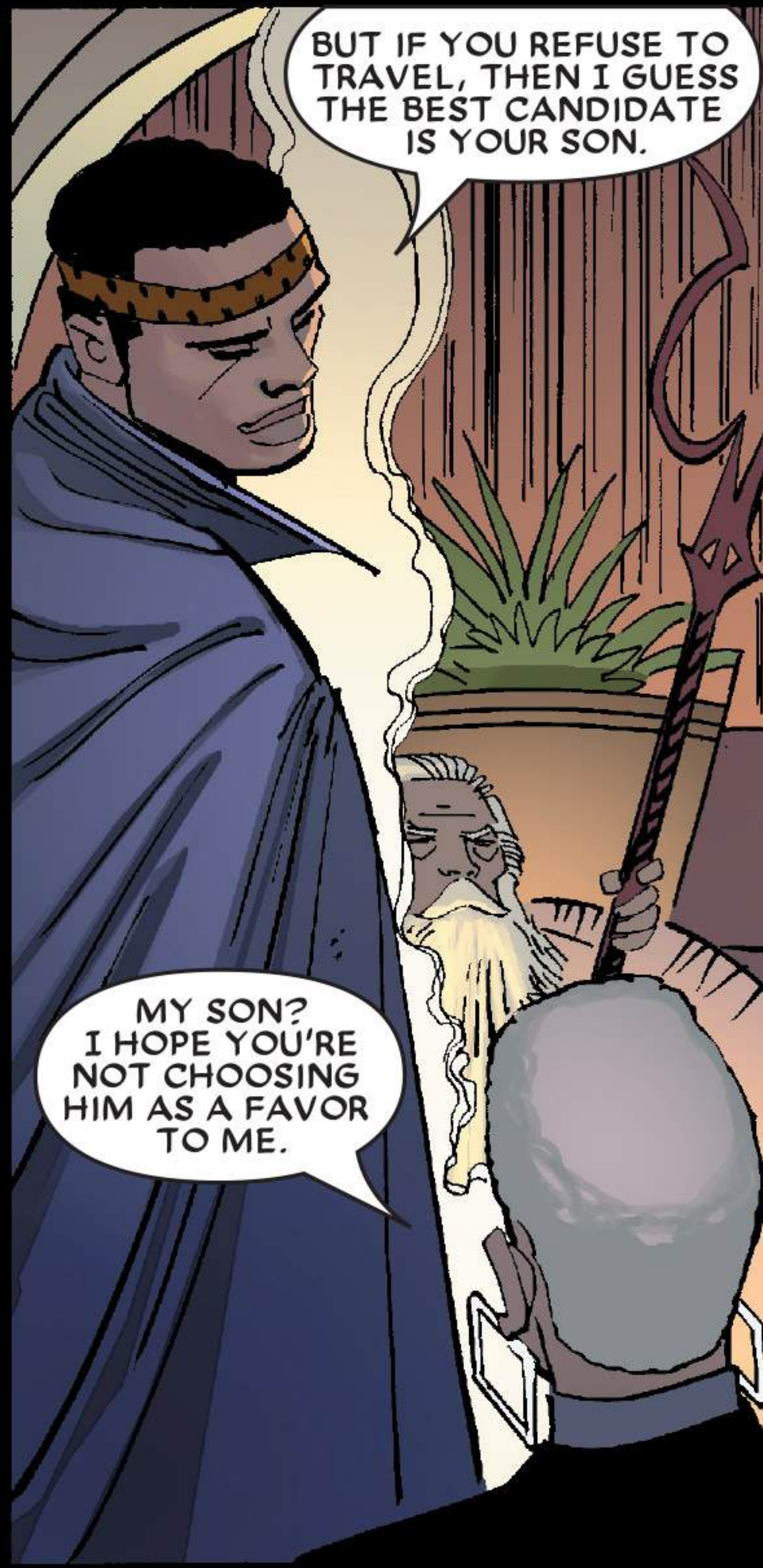
I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO TAKE THAT POST.

LEAVE HOME? FOR FILTHY NEW YORK? AT MY AGE? NOT MY IDEA OF RETIREMENT.



"RETIREMENT", RIGHT... THEY'LL HAVE TO CARRY YOUR BODY OUT OF YOUR OFFICE!

FUNNY, T'CHALLA.



BUT IF YOU REFUSE TO TRAVEL, THEN I GUESS THE BEST CANDIDATE IS YOUR SON.

MY SON? I HOPE YOU'RE NOT CHOOSING HIM AS A FAVOR TO ME.



YOU KNOW THAT'S NOT MY STYLE. HE'S SMART, TOUGH AND LOVES OUR NATION.

HE'S ALSO ENVIOUS OF YOU.

BETTER TO HAVE HIM AWAY FROM HERE.

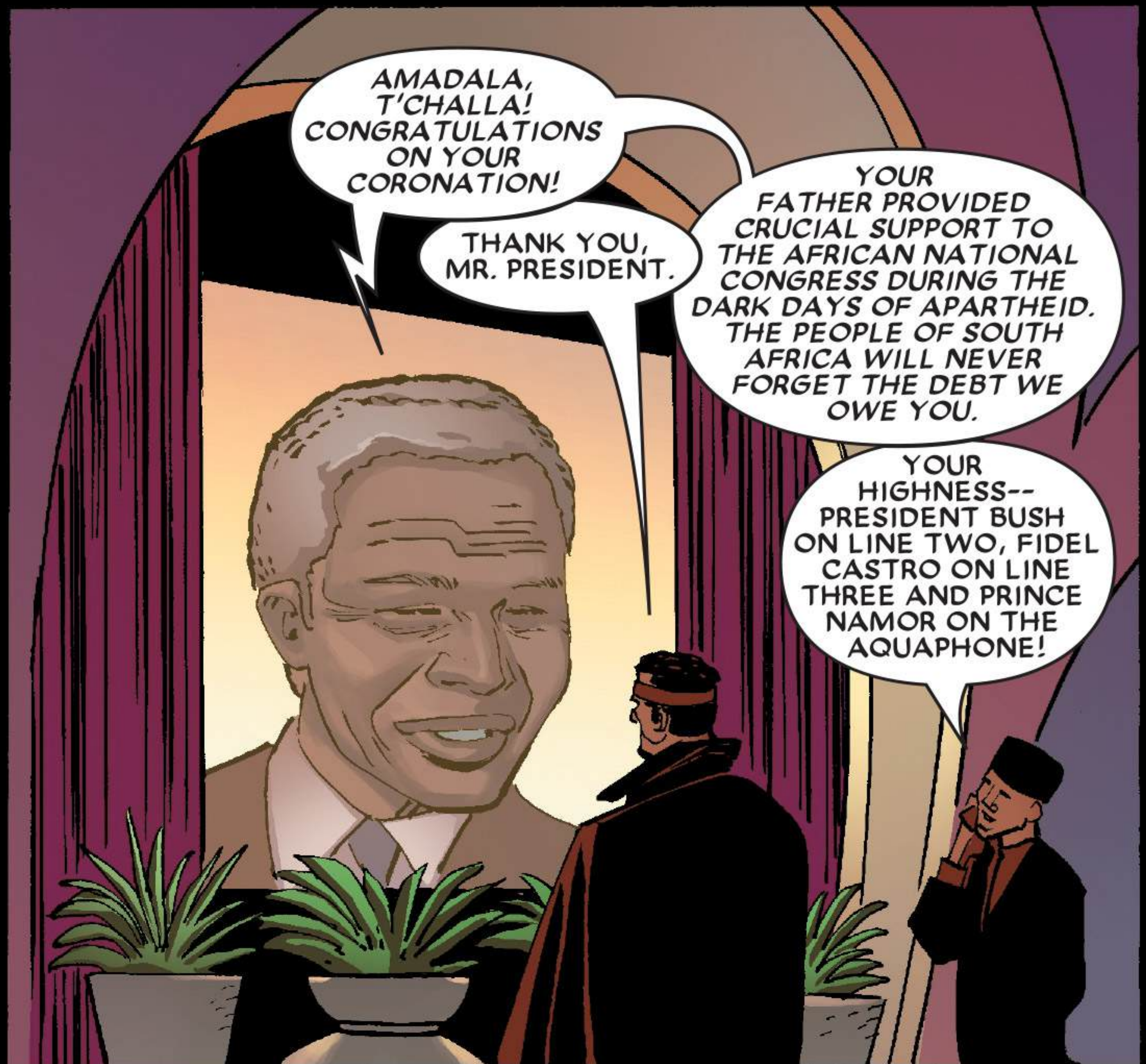


SMART MAN.



NELSON MANDELA CALLING, YOUR HIGHNESS.

I'LL TAKE THE CALL HERE, THANKS.



AMADALA, T'CHALLA! CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR CORONATION!

THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT.

YOUR FATHER PROVIDED CRUCIAL SUPPORT TO THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS DURING THE DARK DAYS OF APARTHEID. THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA WILL NEVER FORGET THE DEBT WE OWE YOU.

YOUR HIGHNESS-- PRESIDENT BUSH ON LINE TWO, FIDEL CASTRO ON LINE THREE AND PRINCE NAMOR ON THE AQUAPHONE!



YOU'RE TELLING ME THE GUY I'M SUPPOSED TO SEDUCE IS *HERE*? IF I'M SUPPOSED TO MAKE A GUY FORGET HIS VOWS, I'M GOING TO NEED TO SHOW MORE SKIN THAN THIS.

LESS IS MORE FOR THIS MARK, CANNIBAL. HE WANTS AN OLD-FASHIONED GIRL. LIKE THE 12TH CENTURY.

I DON'T GET HOW RELIGION FIGURES INTO THIS. I THOUGHT THIS WHOLE DEAL WAS ABOUT MONEY AND GOVERNMENTS AND POWER... AND FOR YOU, REVENGE.

MONEY, POWER--WHAT DO YOU THINK ORGANIZED RELIGION IS ABOUT?



COME IN--QUICKLY.

WHY THE SIDE DOOR? I THOUGHT WE WERE SANCTIONED BY THE POPE?

OFFICIALLY, THE CHURCH HAS NOT BEEN INVOLVED IN MILITARY OPERATIONS IN SEVERAL CENTURIES. HOWEVER, THERE ARE BRANCHES OF THE BUREAUCRACY THAT AREN'T SCARED TO CONDUCT A "HOLY WAR." CONSIDERING THE PONTIFF IS IN DECLINING HEALTH, THERE IS NO NEED TO BOTHER HIM WITH THE DETAILS, OR EVEN KNOWLEDGE THAT CERTAIN MISSIONS ARE OCCURRING AT ALL.

BUT WE DO GET A BLESSING FROM HIS HOLINESS BEFORE WE HEAD TO AFRICA, RIGHT? CAN'T HURT.



WHOA! THESE AREN'T THE SAME FRUITY-LOOKING SPEAR-CARRIERS THEY PUT OUT FOR THE TOURISTS. THAT'S A REAL GUN.

WHAT DID YOU EXPECT? THIS IS WHERE THEY KEEP EVERYTHING FROM THE HOLY GRAIL TO DNA SAMPLES OF JESUS' BLOOD FROM THE SPEAR OF DESTINY.

AND KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN!

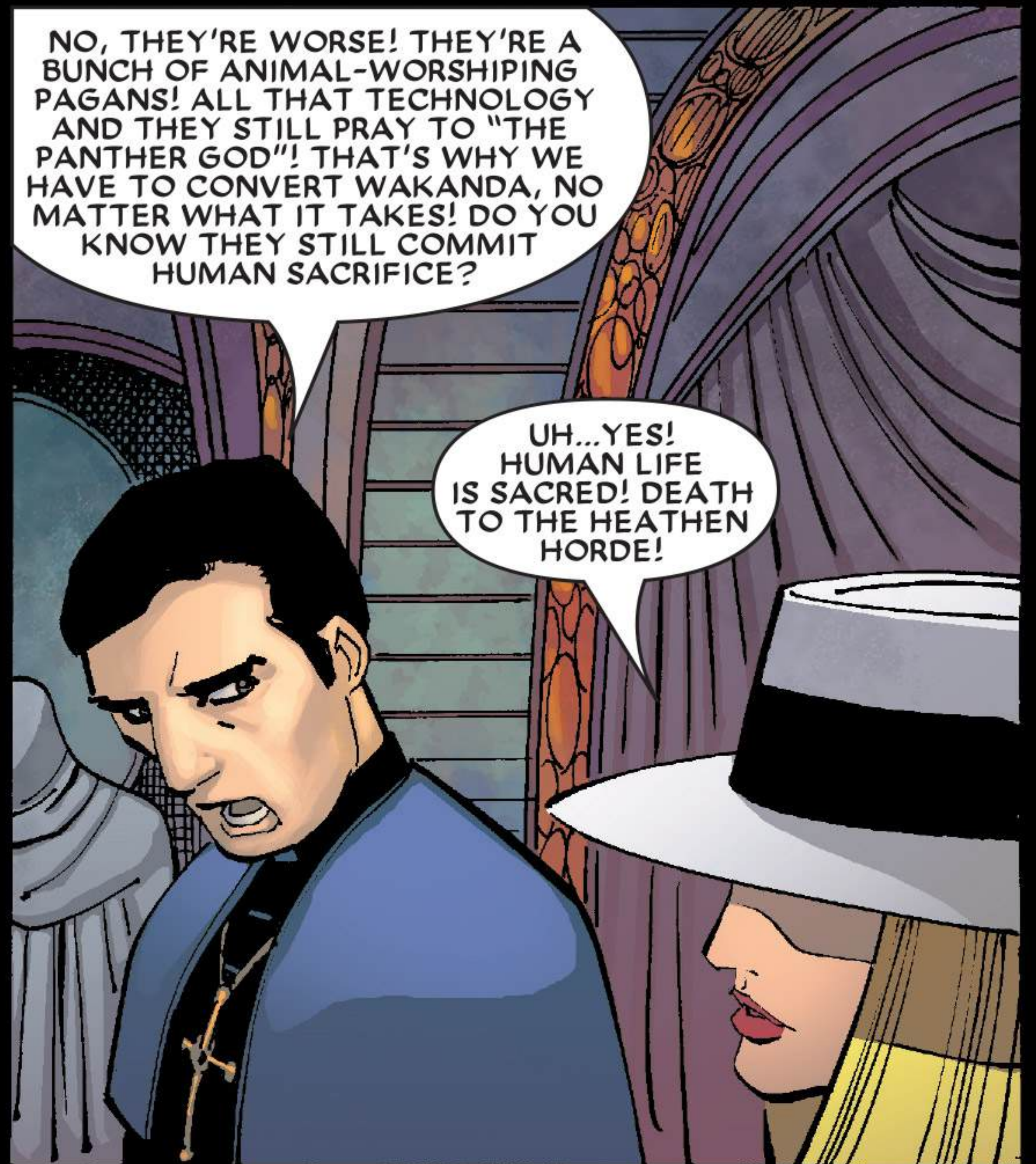


HERE IT IS--
THE EBONY BLADE.
A WEAPON OF VAST
POWER WIELDED BY KNIGHTS
TEMPLAR FOR OVER 600
YEARS. IT BRIEFLY FELL OUT
OF CHURCH HANDS BUT
NOW IT IS BACK IN OUR
CONTROL.



AFRICA IS THE FRONT LINE OF RELIGIOUS
WARFARE OF THE 21ST CENTURY. CHRISTIANITY
IS THE FASTEST GROWING RELIGION ON THE
CONTINENT, BUT MUSLIMS ALSO HAVE A
SIGNIFICANT PRESENCE, DESPITE THEIR
PARTICIPATION IN THE SUDAN SLAVE TRADE.
WHY CAN'T PEOPLE PRACTICE
WHAT THEY PREACH?

BUT THE
WAKANDANS
AREN'T MUSLIM,
ARE THEY?



NO, THEY'RE WORSE! THEY'RE A
BUNCH OF ANIMAL-WORSHIPING
PAGANS! ALL THAT TECHNOLOGY
AND THEY STILL PRAY TO "THE
PANTHER GOD"! THAT'S WHY WE
HAVE TO CONVERT WAKANDA, NO
MATTER WHAT IT TAKES! DO YOU
KNOW THEY STILL COMMIT
HUMAN SACRIFICE?

UH...YES!
HUMAN LIFE
IS SACRED! DEATH
TO THE HEATHEN
HORDE!

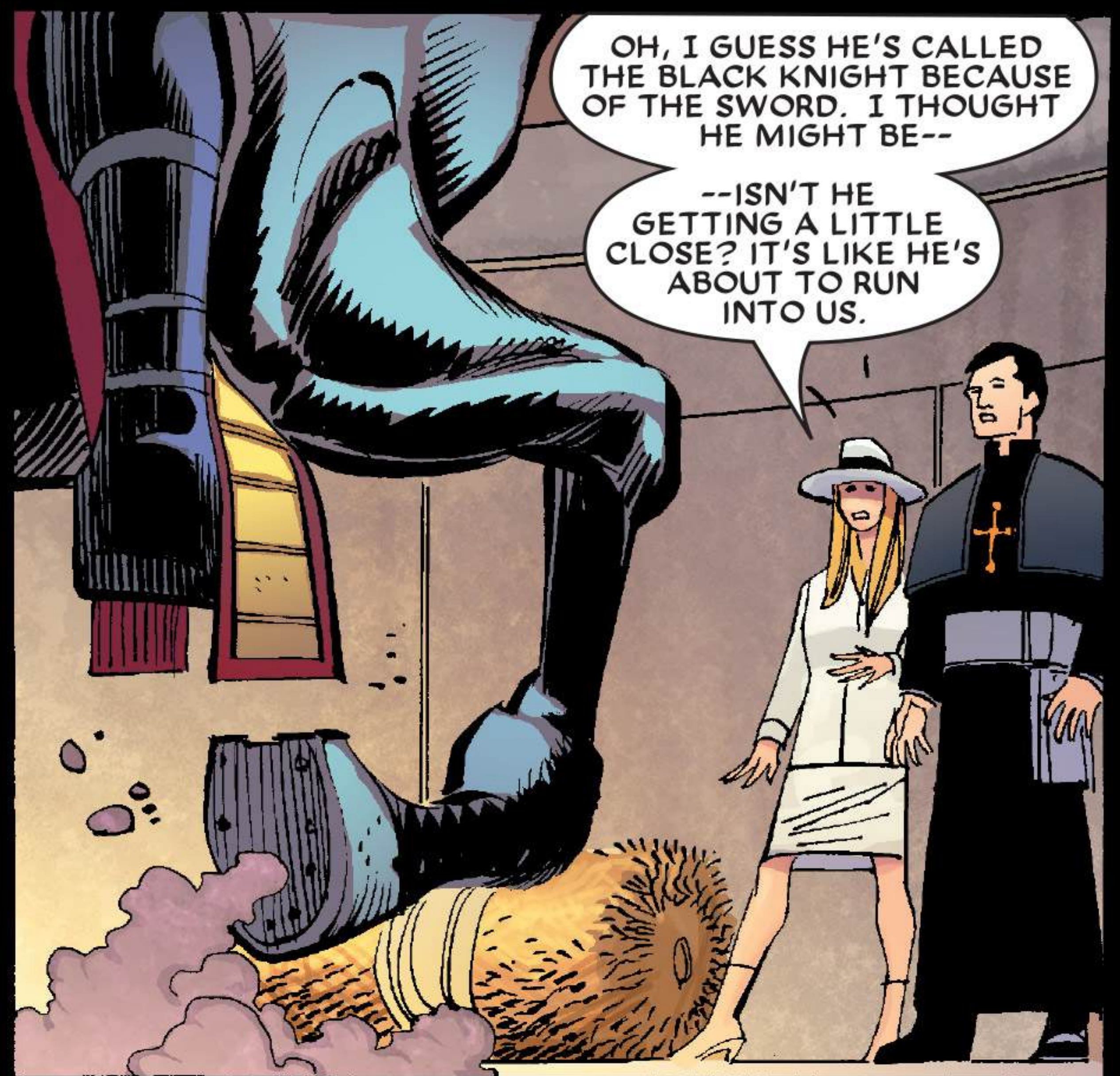
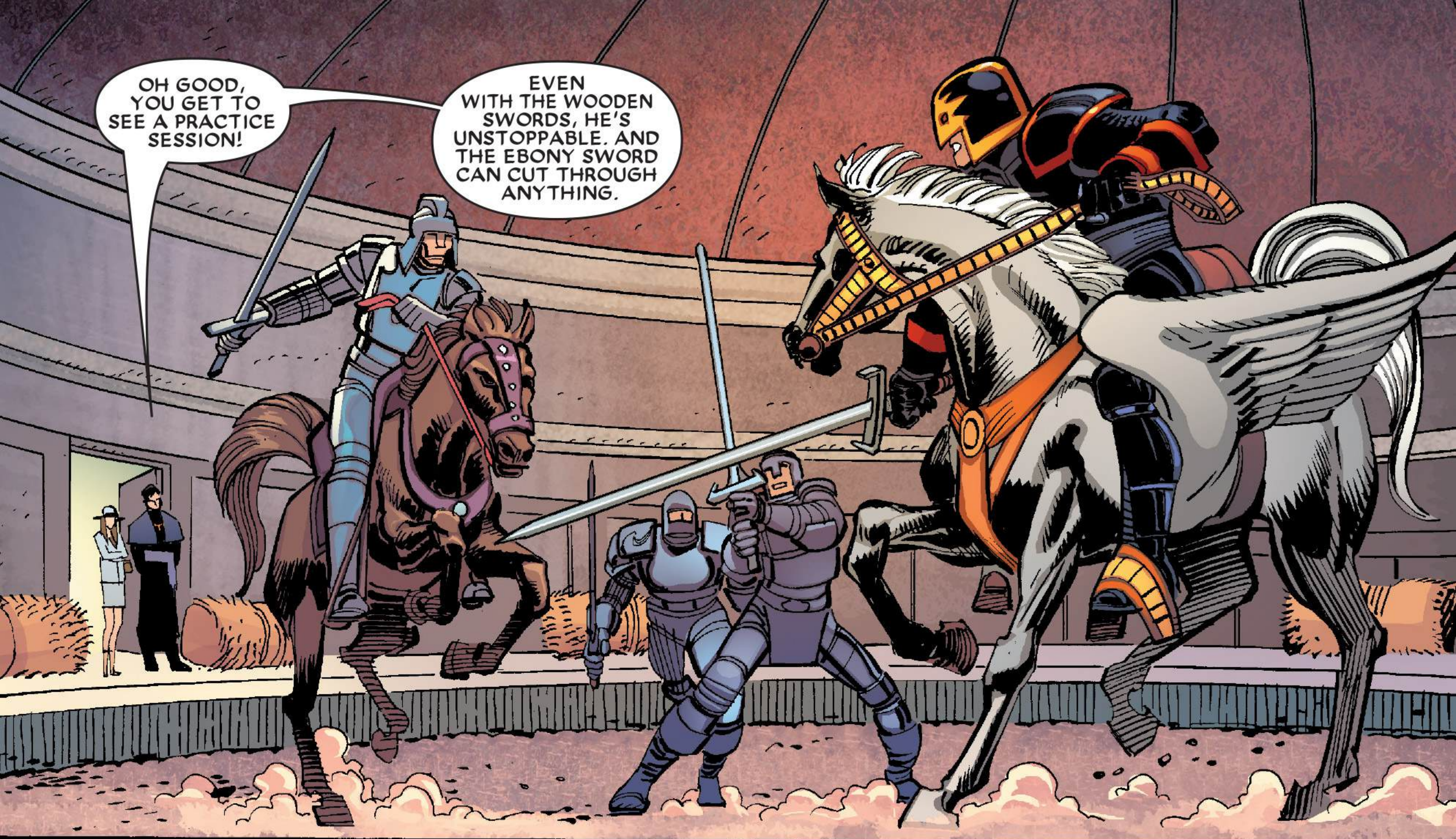


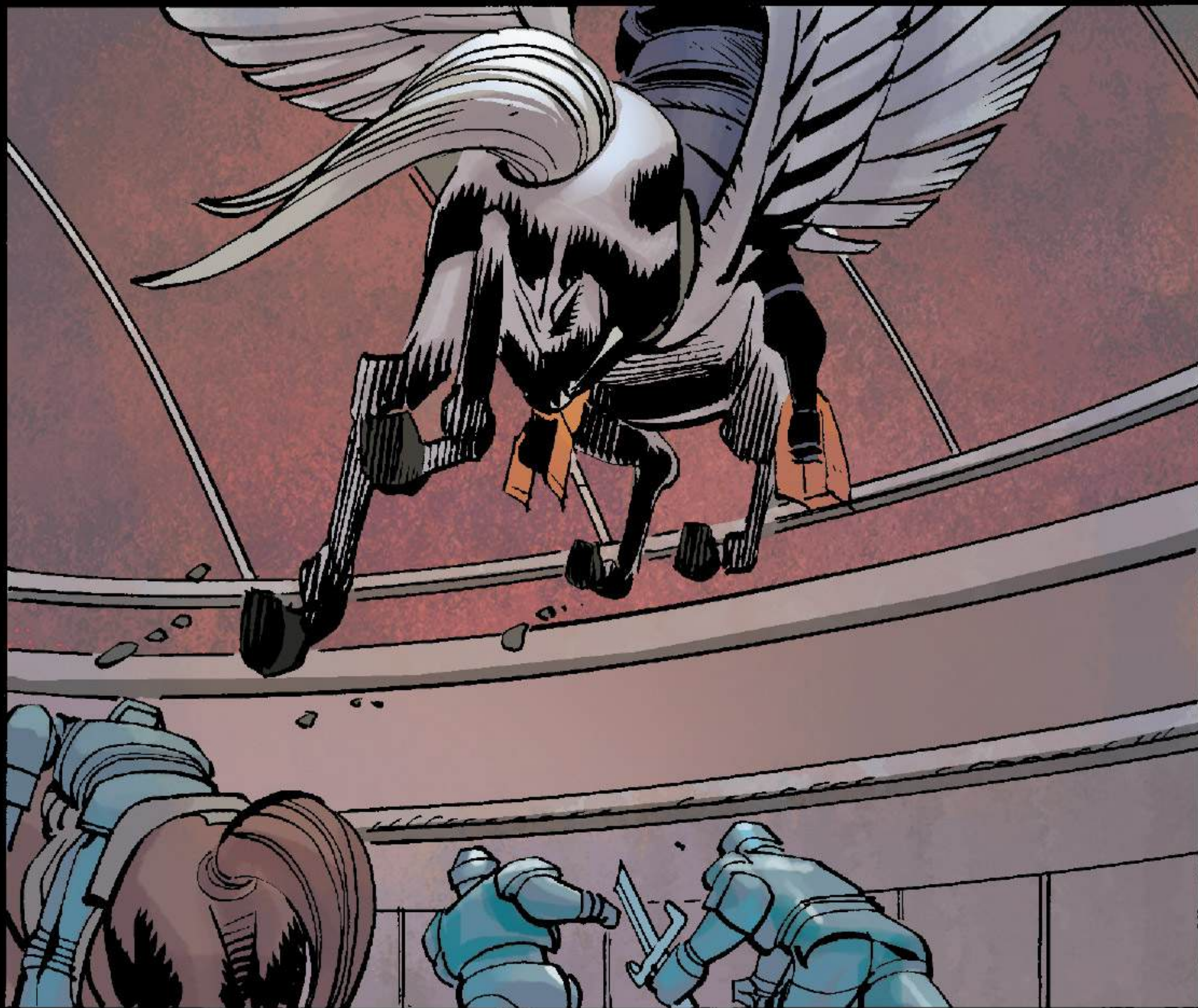
OH, BUT WE'VE FOUND THE
PERFECT SOLDIER FOR YOUR
CRUSADE. WAIT TILL YOU MEET
HIM! A BRITISH LAD--AN ACTUAL
DESCENDANT OF THE BLOODLINE
OF LANCELOT! PURE OF MIND
AND SPIRIT--AND A GREAT
WARRIOR!

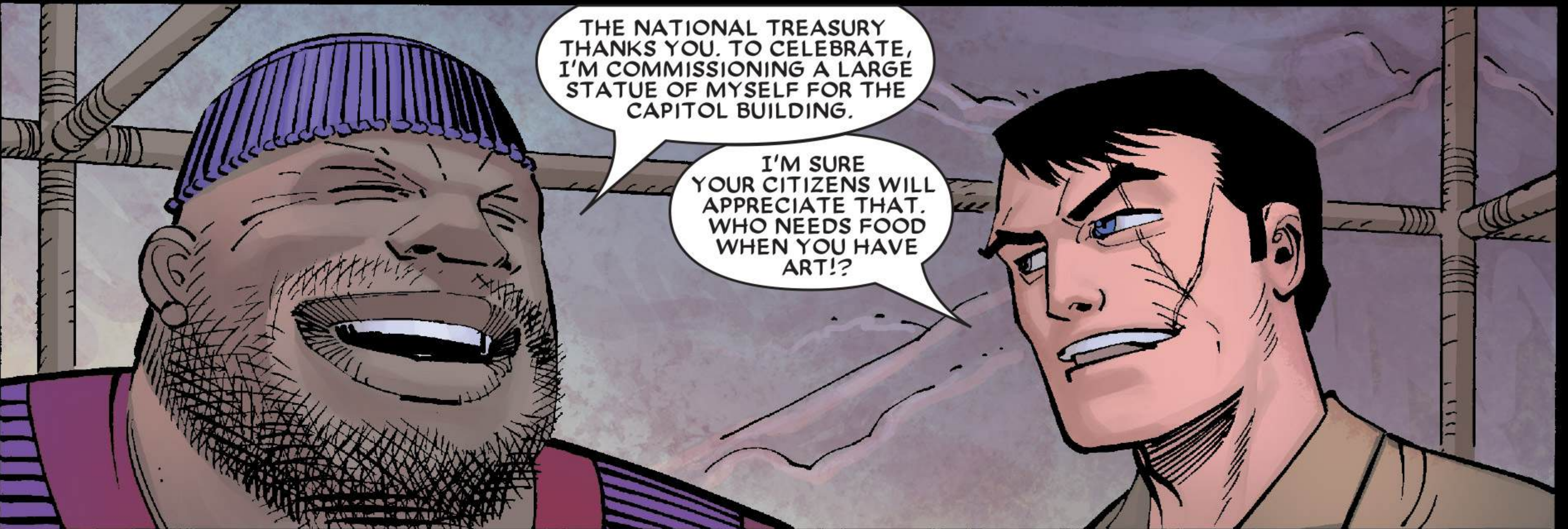


HMMM, I HOPE THE SIGHT
OF SUCH A LOVELY YOUNG
LADY DOESN'T WEAKEN
HIS RESOLVE TO STAY
PURE!

OH, I'M
SURE MY MODESTY
AND HIS VIRTUE
ARE A PERFECT
MATCH.









WE'RE ABOUT TO LAUNCH OUR INVASION. I JUST WANTED TO MAKE SURE YOUR MEN ARE READY.

THE NIGANDAN ARMY IS MORE THAN PREPARED TO TOPPLE THE WAKANDANS!

HMMM, YES...I'M SURE THEY HAVE THE BEST INTENTIONS. I HOPE YOUR GENERAL HAS BECOME MORE COMFORTABLE WITH TAKING ORDERS FROM OUR FIELD COMMANDER.



OF COURSE NOT! BUT HE DOESN'T WANT TO END UP HERE...

GOOD ENOUGH. OH, AND ONE MORE THING. DO YOU HAVE ANY PLUMBERS TO SPARE?



PLUMBERS, PLUMBERS... DID I KILL ALL THE PLUMBERS IN MY LAST PURGE?

NO SIR. THAT WAS THE DOCTORS.

VERY GOOD THEN. SEND KLAU OUR BEST PLUMBER.

ERRR... PERHAPS SECOND BEST... SOMEONE A BIT MORE... DISPOSABLE.



YOUR EXCELLENCY-- YOUR 3 O'CLOCK IS HERE!

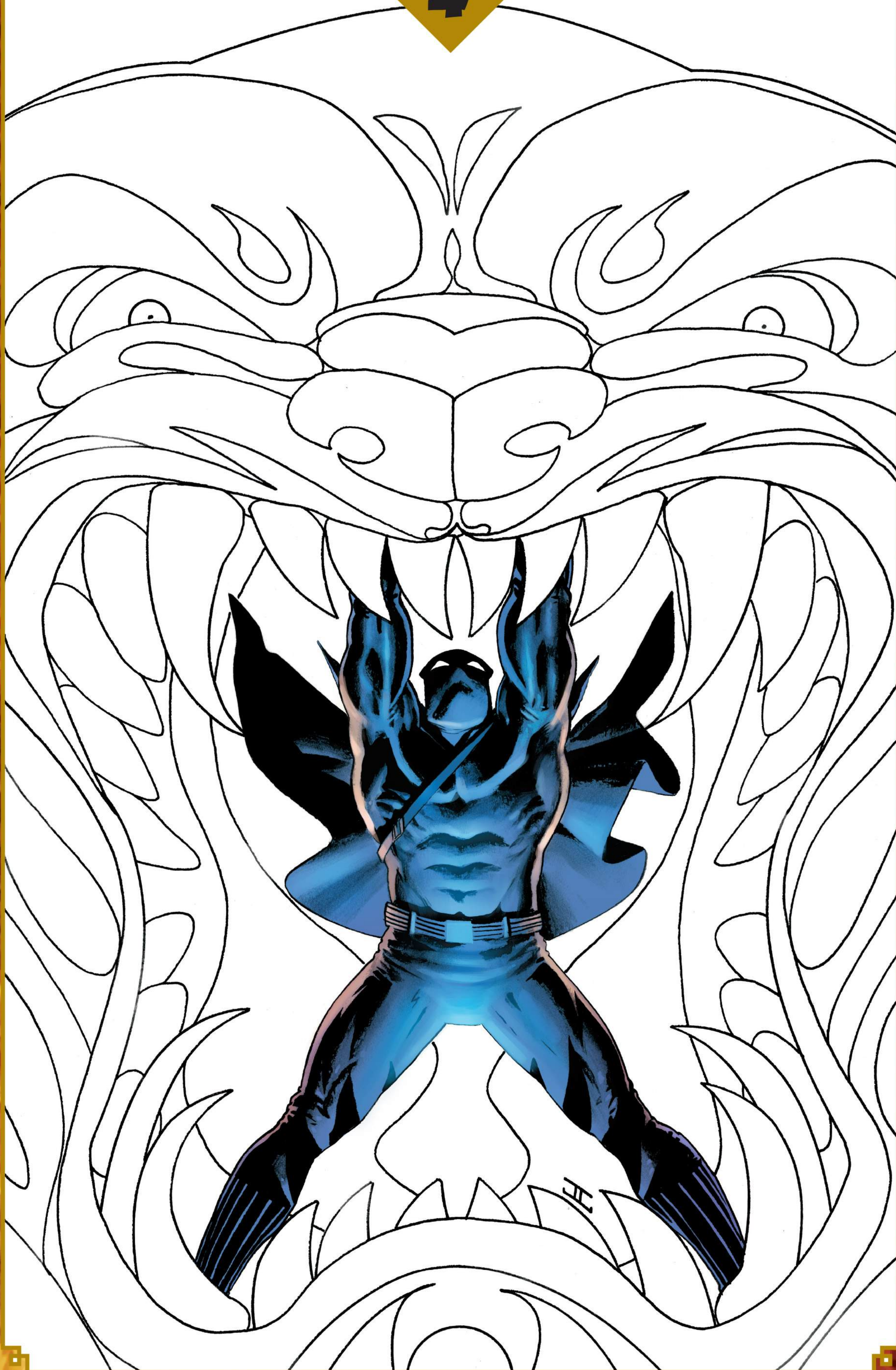
NO NO PLEASE DON'T I TAKE IT BACK...

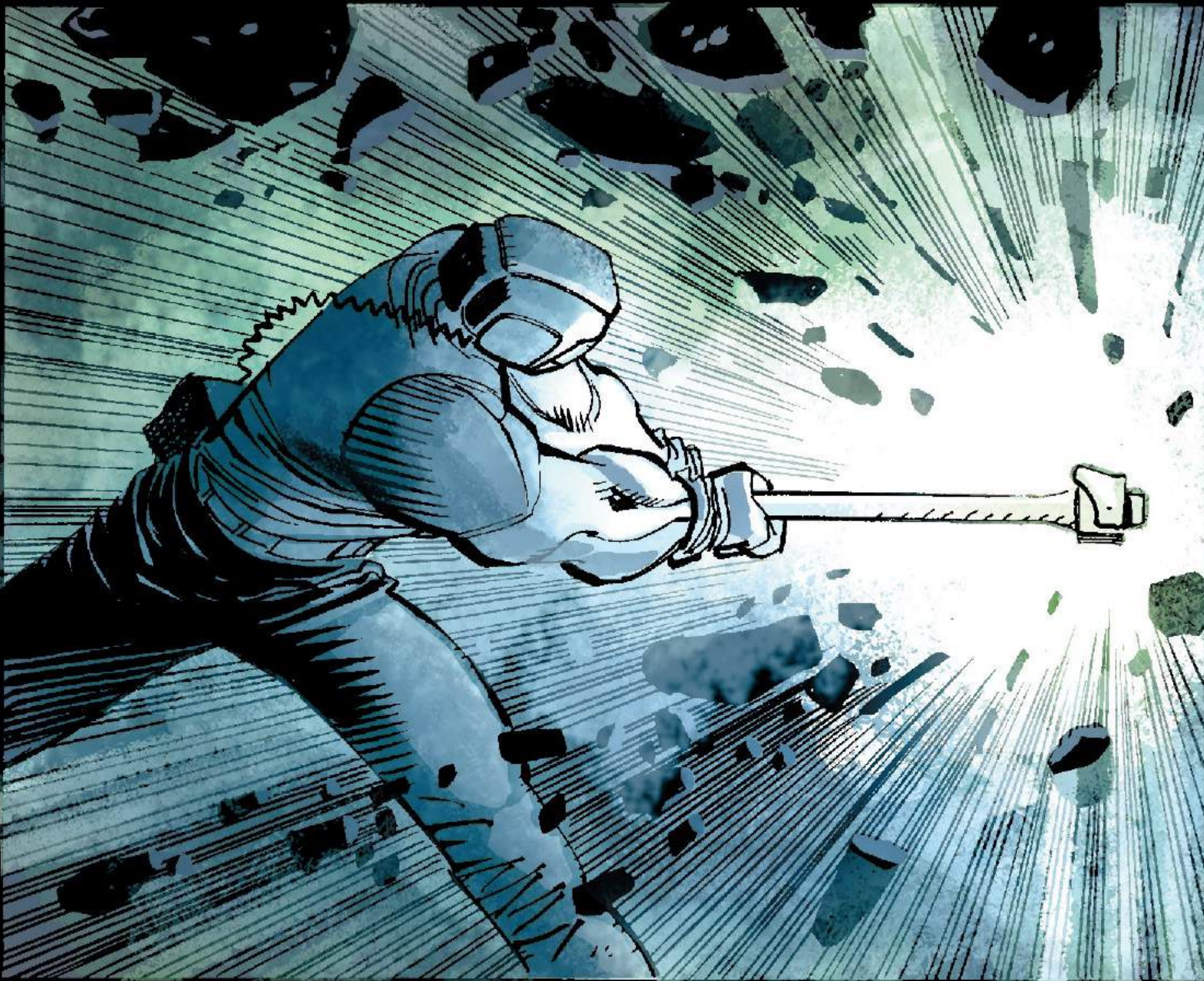
TELL THE TROOPS-- THE ATTACK STARTS TOMORROW AT DAWN...

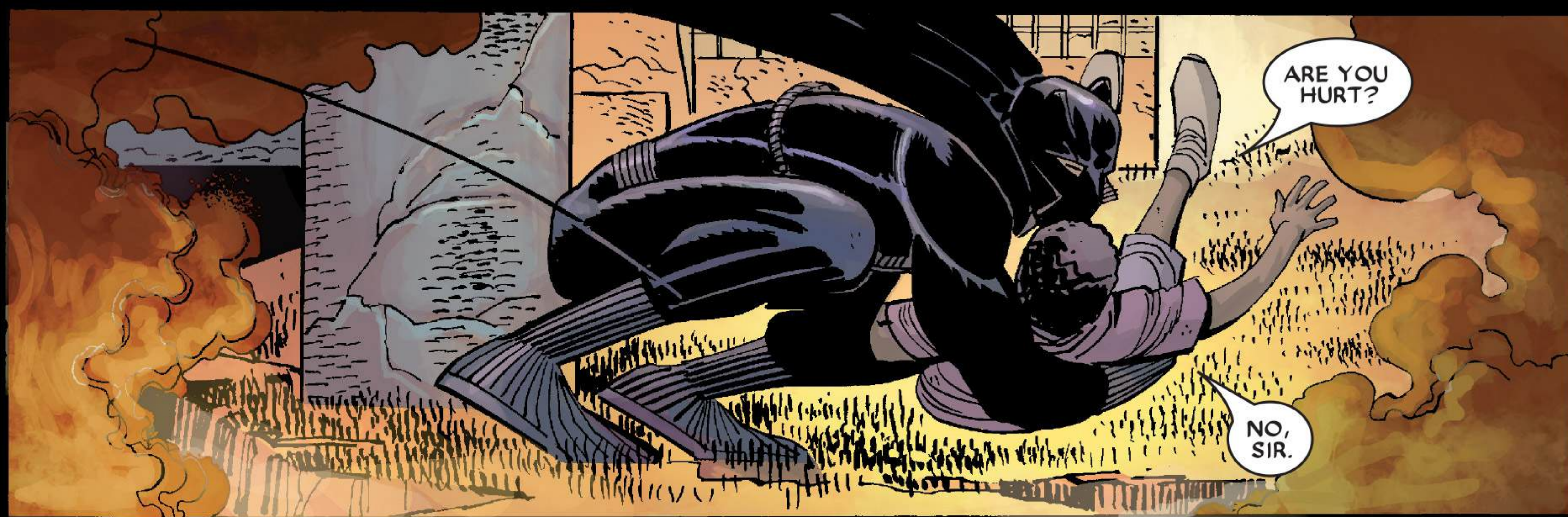
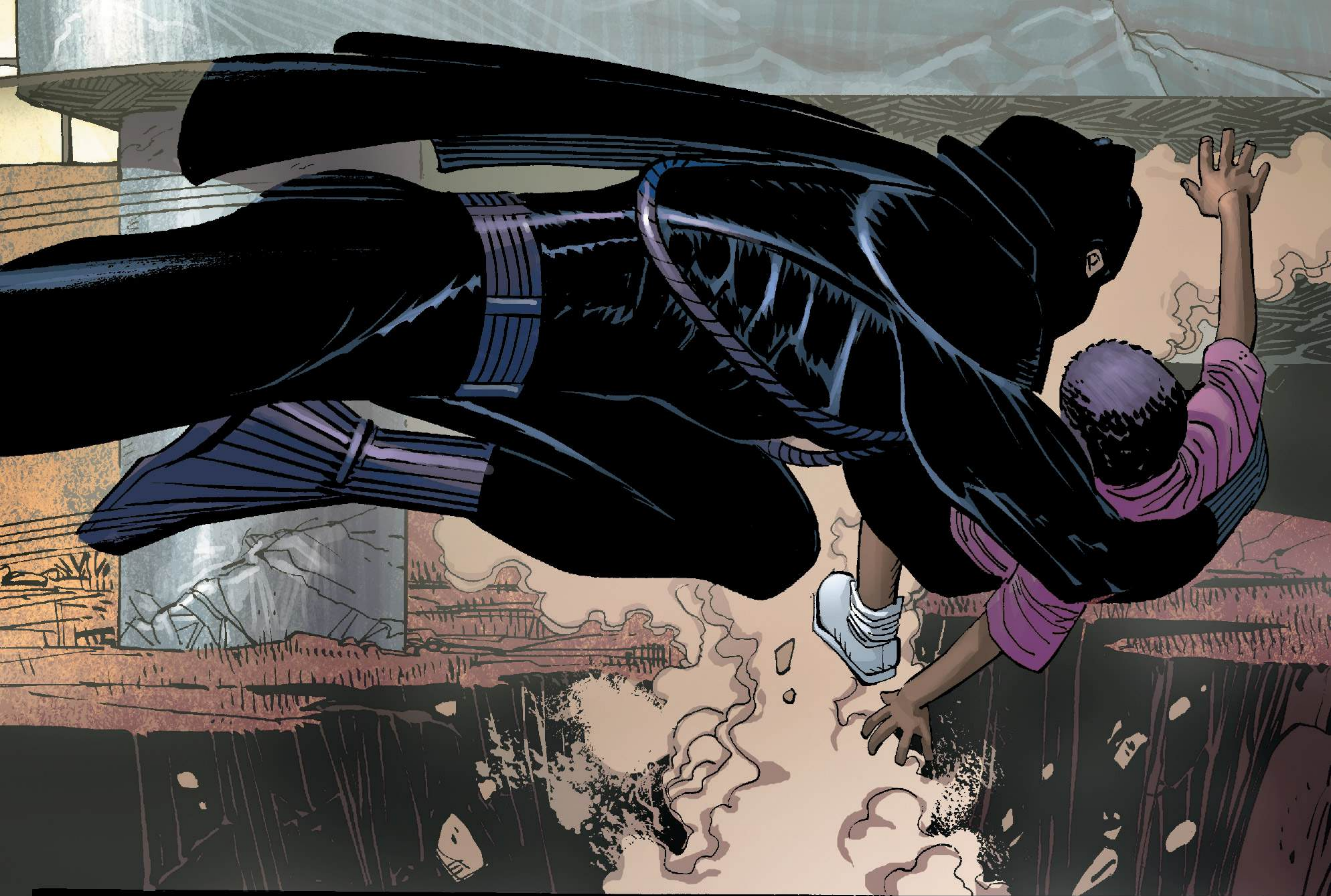
OH!

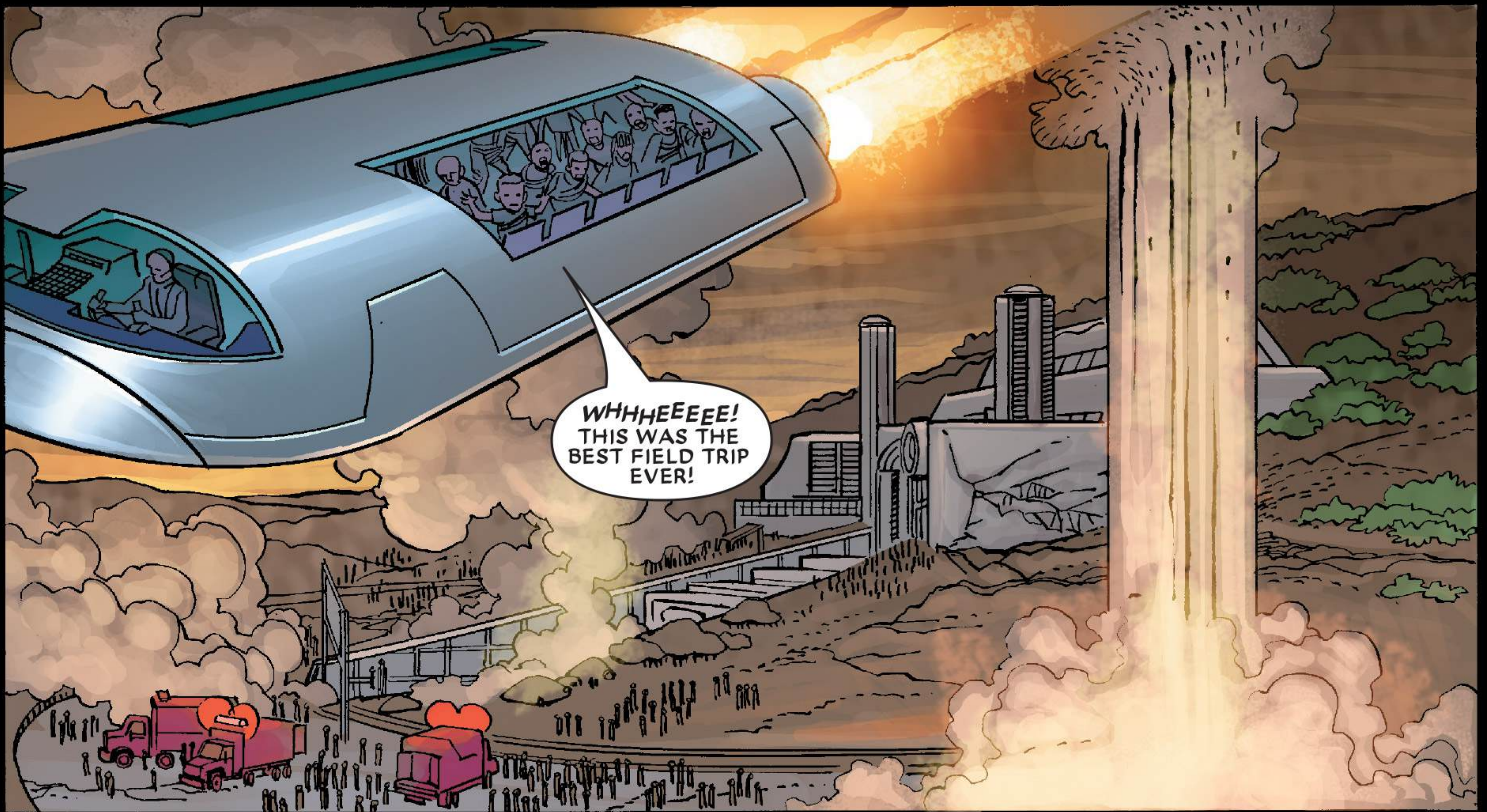


...AND TELL IGOR HIS TOILET'S GETTING FIXED.









WHHEEEEE!
THIS WAS THE
BEST FIELD TRIP
EVER!



WELL, AT LEAST NOBODY
DIED. THE KIDS GOT A
LITTLE BANGED
UP, BUT THEY'RE
OKAY.

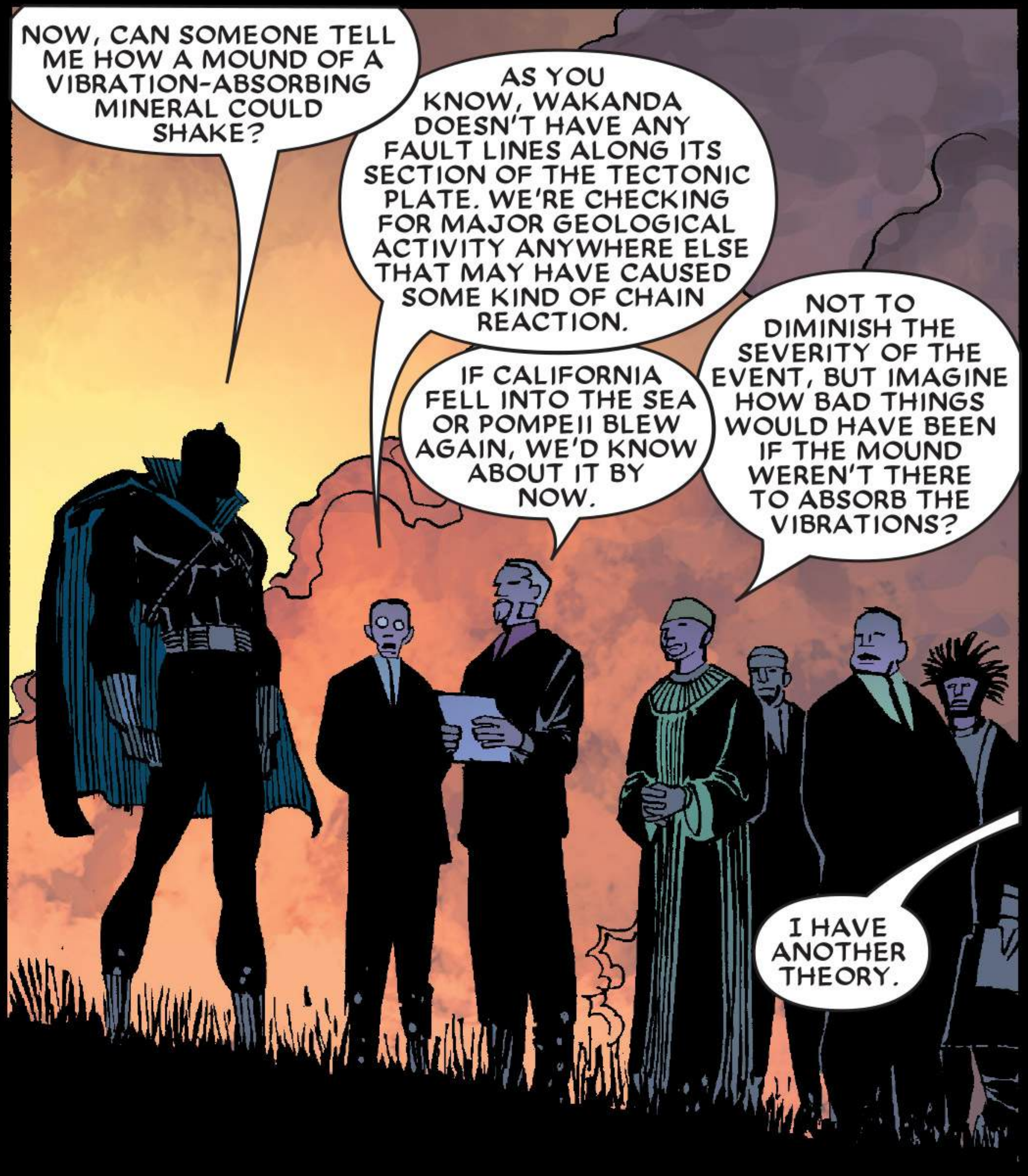
AND
WHAT
ABOUT THE
MINERS?



NO
MAJOR
INJURIES. IT'S
A MIRACLE,
REALLY.

ARE YOU
THE LAST
MAN DOWN
THERE?

YES!



NOW, CAN SOMEONE TELL
ME HOW A MOUND OF A
VIBRATION-ABSORBING
MINERAL COULD
SHAKE?

AS YOU
KNOW, WAKANDA
DOESN'T HAVE ANY
FAULT LINES ALONG ITS
SECTION OF THE TECTONIC
PLATE. WE'RE CHECKING
FOR MAJOR GEOLOGICAL
ACTIVITY ANYWHERE ELSE
THAT MAY HAVE CAUSED
SOME KIND OF CHAIN
REACTION.

IF CALIFORNIA
FELL INTO THE SEA
OR POMPEII BLEW
AGAIN, WE'D KNOW
ABOUT IT BY
NOW.

NOT TO
DIMINISH THE
SEVERITY OF THE
EVENT, BUT IMAGINE
HOW BAD THINGS
WOULD HAVE BEEN
IF THE MOUND
WEREN'T THERE
TO ABSORB THE
VIBRATIONS?

I HAVE
ANOTHER
THEORY.



I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH OUR VIBRANIUM.

AND YOUR TWO YEARS OF STUDY IN NUCLEAR PHYSICS MAKES YOU EXPERT ENOUGH TO CONTRADICT OUR SCIENCE OFFICER, SHURI?



PLEASE PARDON MY LACK OF TACT, BUT YES, I'D LIKE TO INVESTIGATE ANOTHER POSSIBILITY. I'D JUST NEED A SMALL TEAM--OF ACTUAL EXPERTS, THANK YOU--TO WORK WITH ME DOWN IN THE MINE SHAFT--



OUT OF THE QUESTION!

BESIDES BEING DIRTY AND DANGEROUS TO YOU, I AM NOT RISKING THE LIVES OF OTHER MEN IN CASE OF A SECOND CAVE-IN. CASE CLOSED.



T'CHALLA--!



WHY WON'T YOU CONSIDER MY-- HUMPH!



WHY ISN'T HE AT THE HOSPITAL?

HE REFUSED TO LEAVE UNTIL HE COULD SHOW HIS GRATITUDE.

NOW CHILDREN TELL ADULTS WHAT TO DO?



NO, HIS PARENTS
TOLD HIM WHAT
TO DO.



PANTHER
GOD, I--

WHAT'S
YOUR NAME?

K'SHAN.



K'SHAN,
I AM A
MAN.

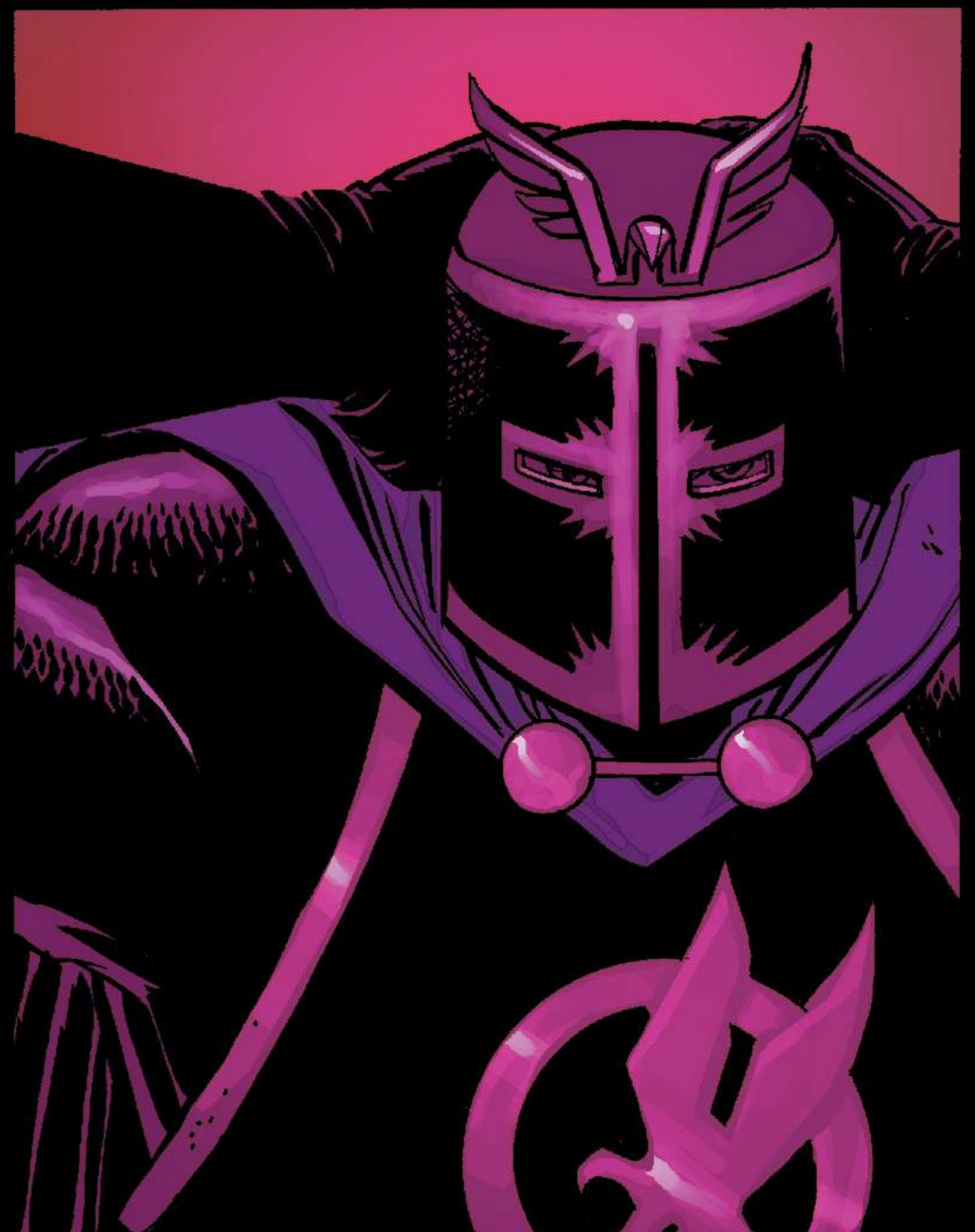
YOU ARE THE
BLACK PANTHER!
SACRED GOD OF
OUR CLAN! WHEN WE
MOVED TO THE CITY, I
NEVER DREAMED THAT
I WOULD BE BLESSED
WITH YOUR HOLY
PRESENCE.

GOD WORKS THROUGH
ME, THE SAME AS YOU.
THERE IS NO FEAT I
ACHIEVE THAT YOU
ARE NOT CAPABLE
OF.



...AND
THAT'S WHY
HE'S--

--THE
BLACK PANTHER.
I KNOW, HE'S BEEN
MY BROTHER MY
WHOLE LIFE. I'M JUST
TRYING TO DO
MY PART.





GOD
WORKS IN
MYSTERIOUS
WAYS.

CENTURIES AGO, WE BROUGHT
CIVILIZATION, COMMERCE AND
GOD TO AFRICA. WE DRAGGED
THEM INTO THE 20TH
CENTURY.

IN
CHAINS.

SSSHHH!

NOW AT THE DAWN OF A NEW
CENTURY, AFRICA NEEDS OUR
HELP MORE THAN EVER. AND
HERE STAND REPRESENTATIVES
OF FOUR GREAT NATIONS
COMMITTED TO DO
JUST THAT....

...FRANCE....

...BELGIUM...

...AMERICA...



...AND GREAT BRITAIN. WHILE IT IS REGRETTABLE THAT FORCE IS NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS--

--SOMETIMES YA GOTTA KICK A LITTLE BUTT IN THE NAME OF JEEZUS!



THE PEOPLE OF AFRICA WANT GOD IN THEIR LIVES, AND THIS EBONY BLADE SHALL GRANT THEM THEIR WISH.



YOU PRAY WHILE WE STEAL--IT ALWAYS WORKS.

SHUT UP! WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?

I'M A PROFESSIONAL, NOT A ZEALOT.



I'M AWARE MANY OF YOU ARE FIGHTING FOR DIFFERENT REASONS.



SOME OF YOU MAY BE HERE FOR GLORY, WEALTH, REVENGE...OR JUST REGULAR MEALS.

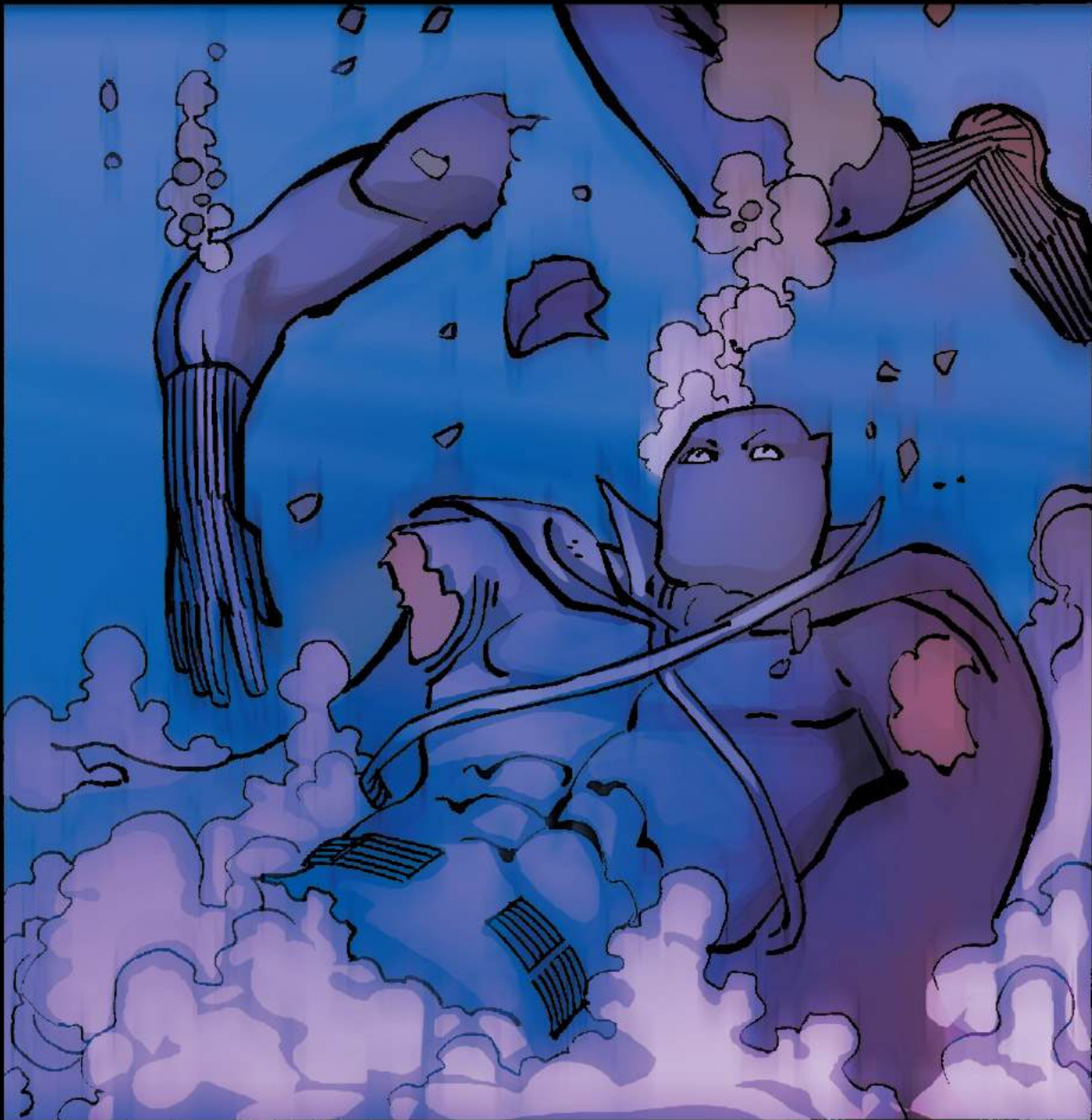


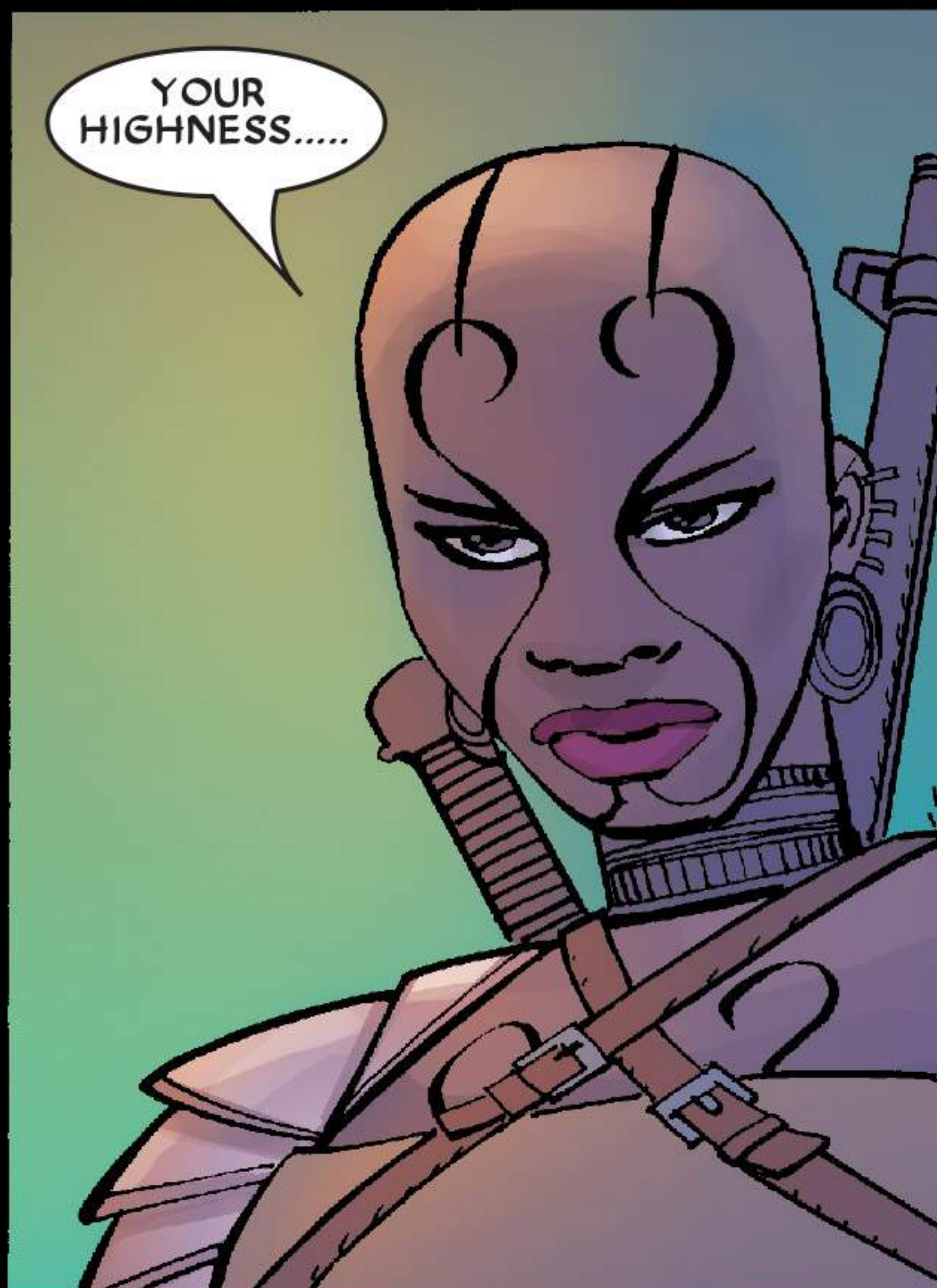
BUT WHATEVER YOUR REASON, KNOW THAT THE HAND OF GOD GUIDES US ALL IN THIS HOLY CRUSADE!



AAAA-MEN!







YOUR HIGHNESS.....



....HMMM?
YES. WHAT
IS IT?

IT'S AN
EMERGENCY.



AMANDLA!

STAND
DOWN, W'KABI,
WHAT'S GOING
ON?



WE'VE GOT A BOGEY COMING
OUR WAY. WE'VE GOT A FEW
FUZZY IMAGES FROM CAMERAS
LOCATED AT THE FAR
WEST EDGE OF THE
KINGDOM.

MY HEAD OF
SECURITY COULDN'T
DEAL WITH A WILD
ANIMAL WITHOUT ME?



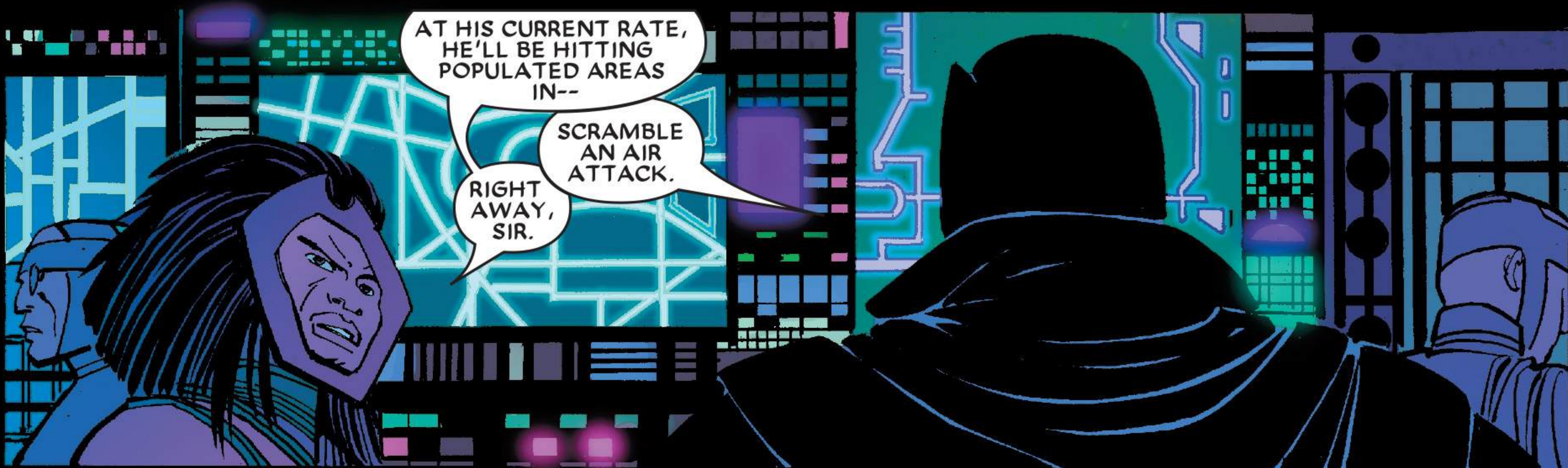
IT'S NOT
JUST AN ANIMAL.
SEE? IT'S ON TWO
FEET. LIKE A MAN.
AND IT'S DOING A
STEADY 35 MILES
PER HOUR.



IT RAN
THROUGH AN
ELECTRICAL FENCE
A HALF HOUR AGO.
DIDN'T SLOW HIM
DOWN.



FIFTEEN
MINUTES AGO,
IT RAN THROUGH
OUR MINEFIELD.



AT HIS CURRENT RATE,
HE'LL BE HITTING
POPULATED AREAS
IN--

SCRAMBLE
AN AIR
ATTACK.

RIGHT
AWAY,
SIR.



AND PULL UP ANY FILES
WE HAVE ON THE RHINO.
WHAT IS HE DOING IN
AFRICA?

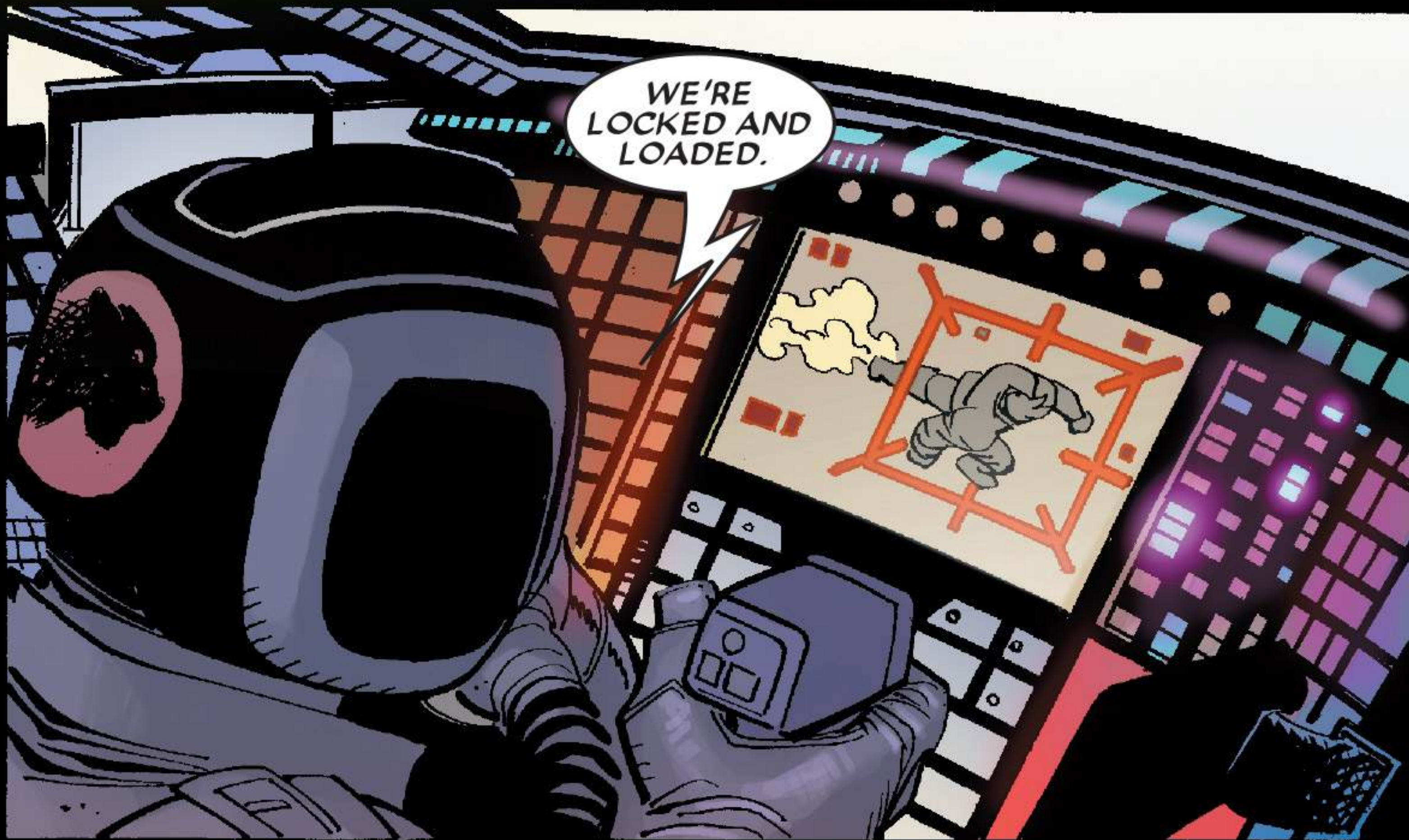
SIR,
AREN'T RHINOS
NATIVE
TO--?



OH. THE RHINO, AS
IN SUPER-VILLAIN--
RIGHT AWAY,
SIR.



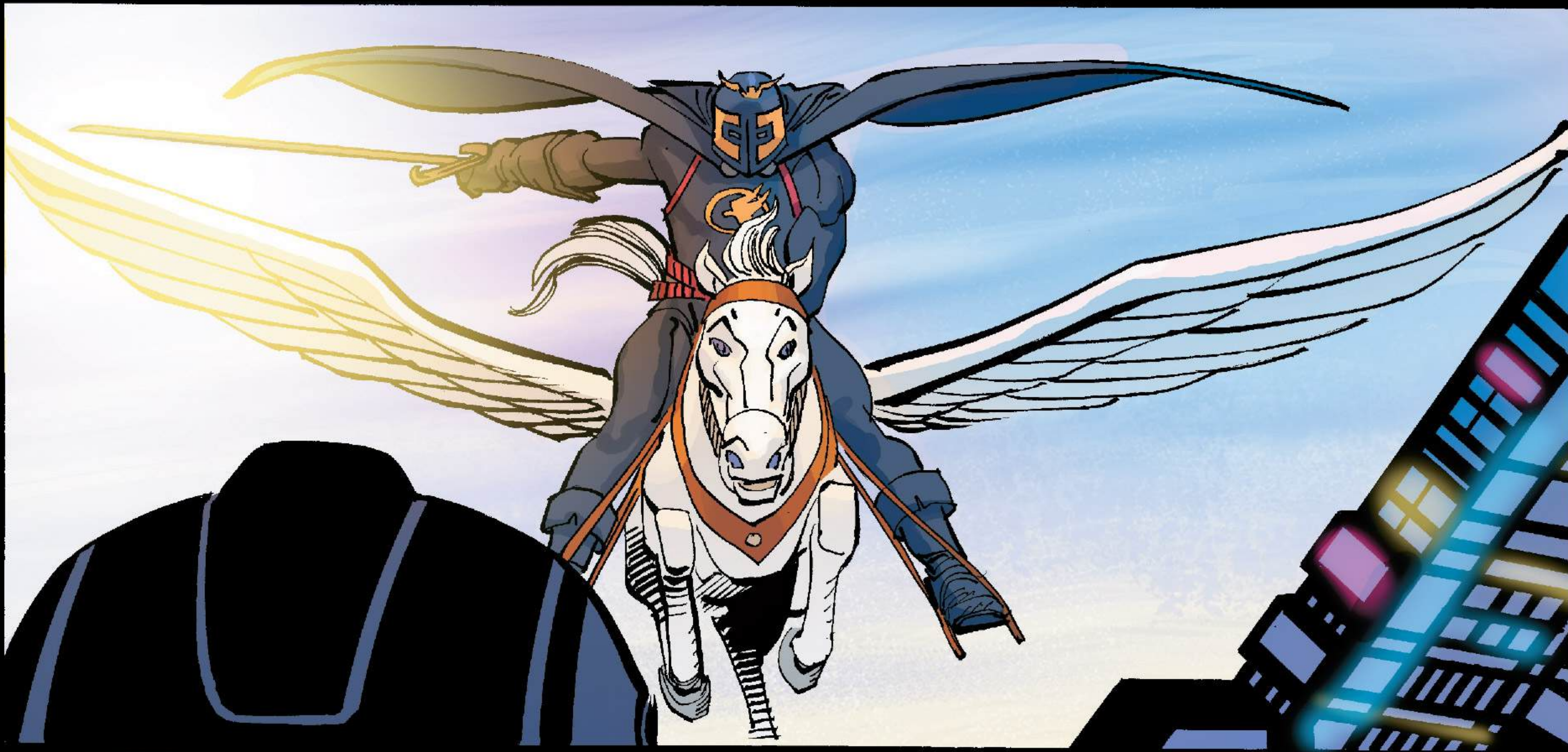
WE'VE
GOT A VISUAL
ON THE
TARGET.



WE'RE
LOCKED AND
LOADED.



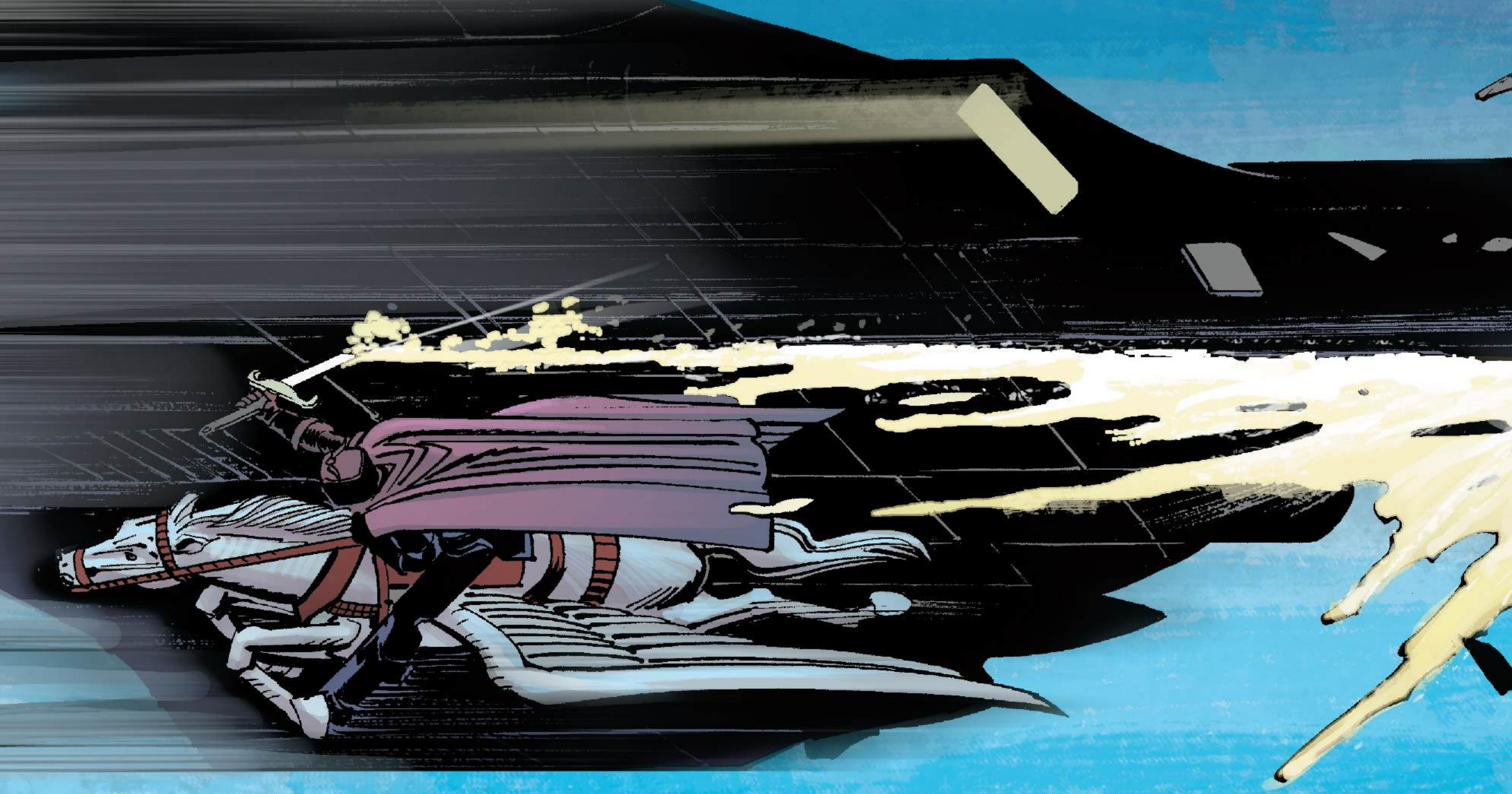
--WHAT
THE--?!



I GOT A
MAN ON A
FLYING HORSE
ATTACKING
ME WITH A
SWORD!

HOW DID
A HORSE GET
IN MY AIRSPACE
WITHOUT ME
KNOWING?

I GUESS
HE FLEW
UNDER THE
RADAR,
SIR.



I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS!
HE GOT ME!
I'M GOING DOWN!

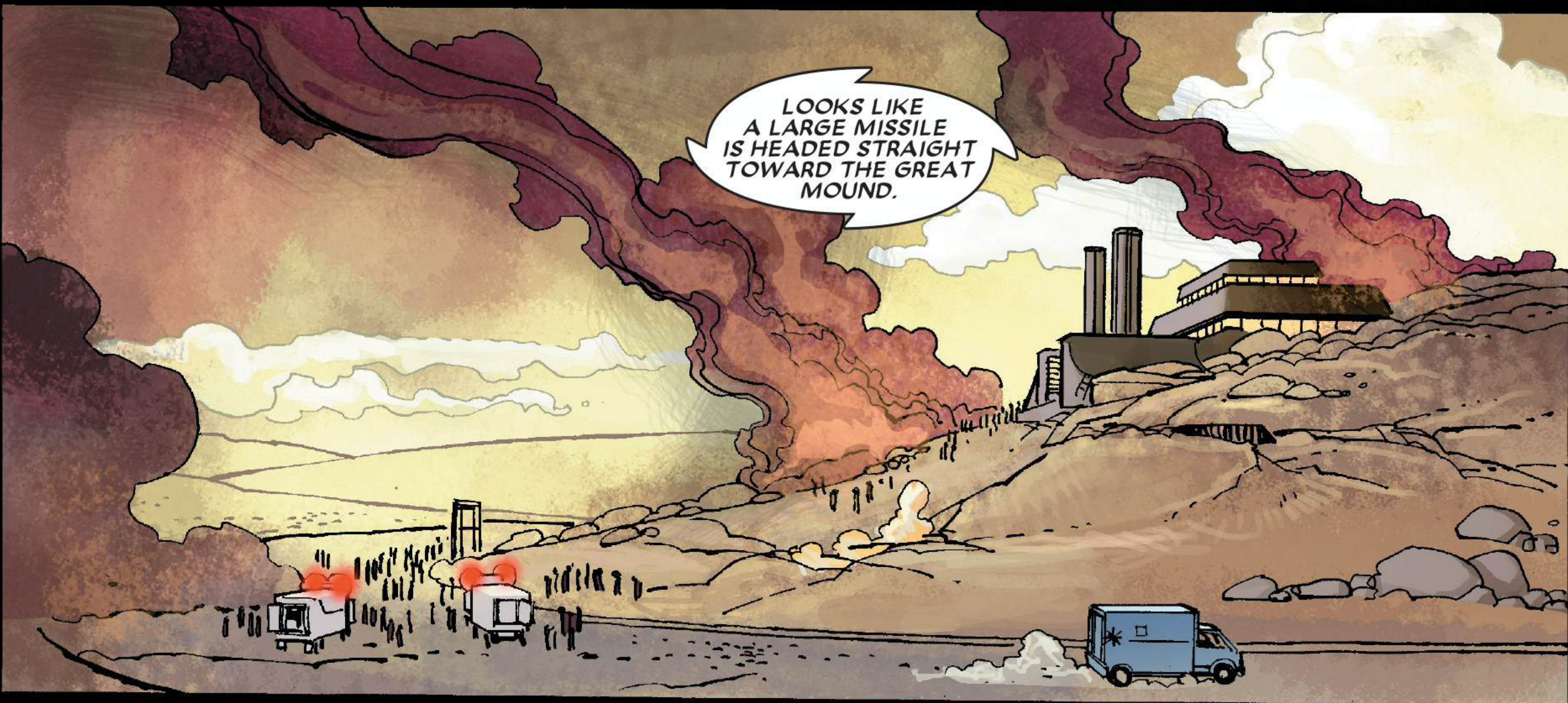
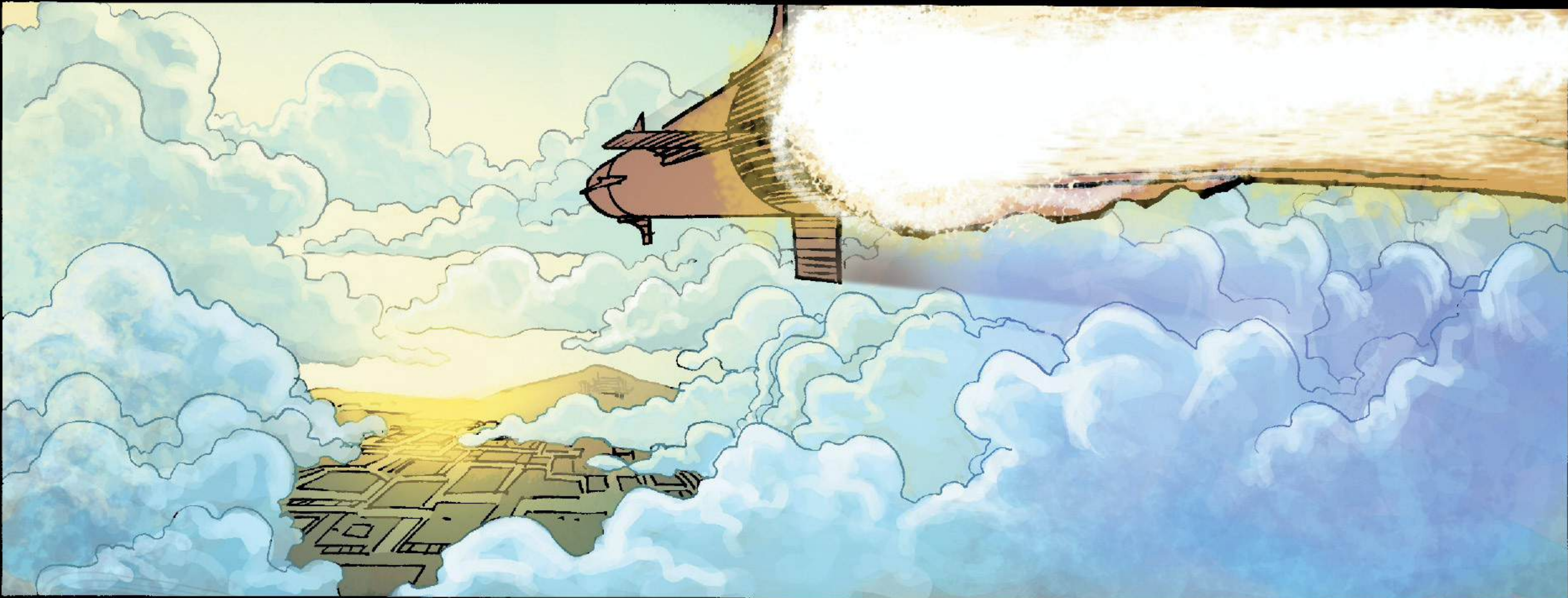


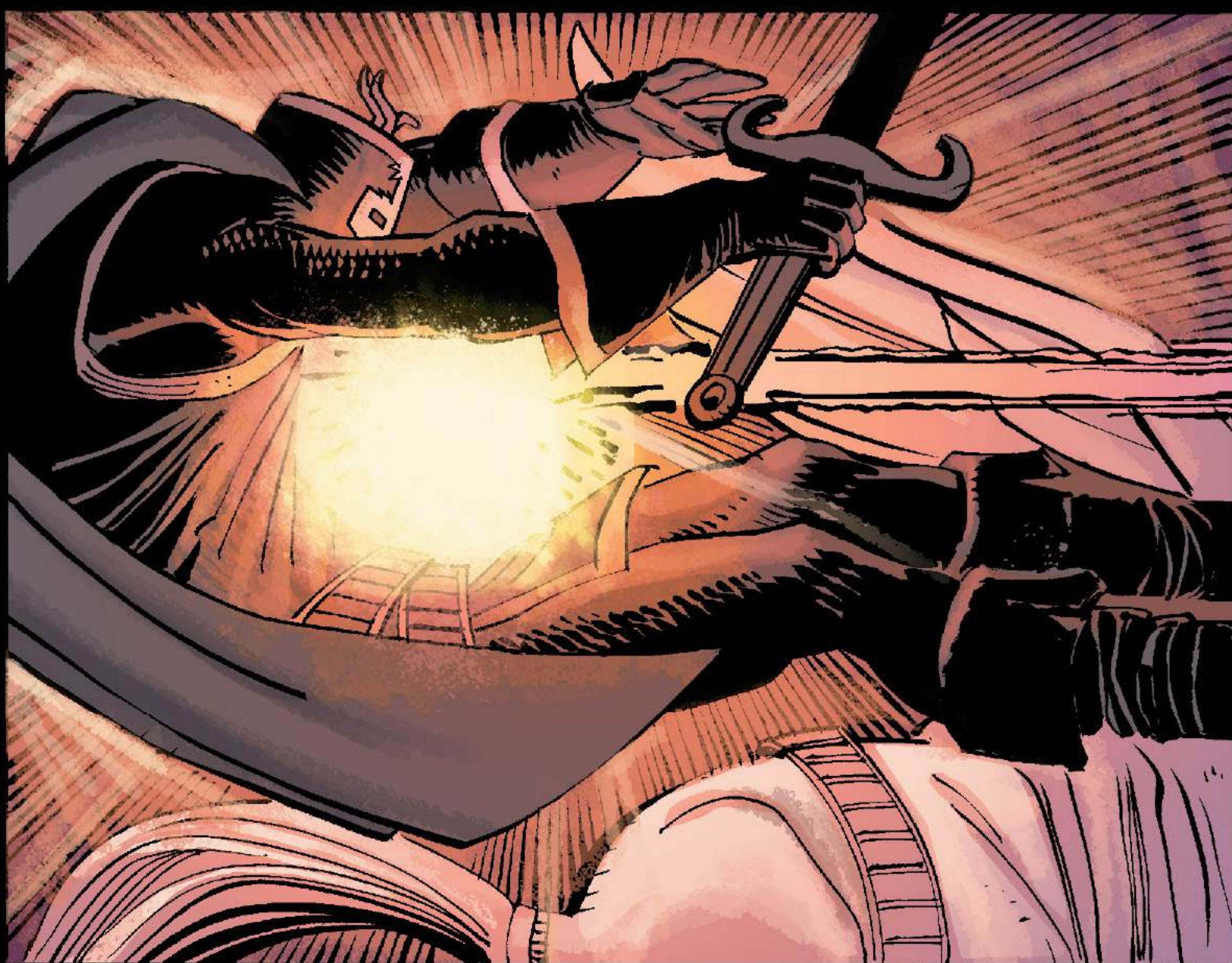
THIS IS CAPT. ASHEI,
CONFIRMING--A MAN
ON FLYING HORSEBACK
JUST TOOK DOWN
ONE OF OURS.

HAVE YOU
DROPPED YOUR
PAYLOAD ON
THE RHINO?



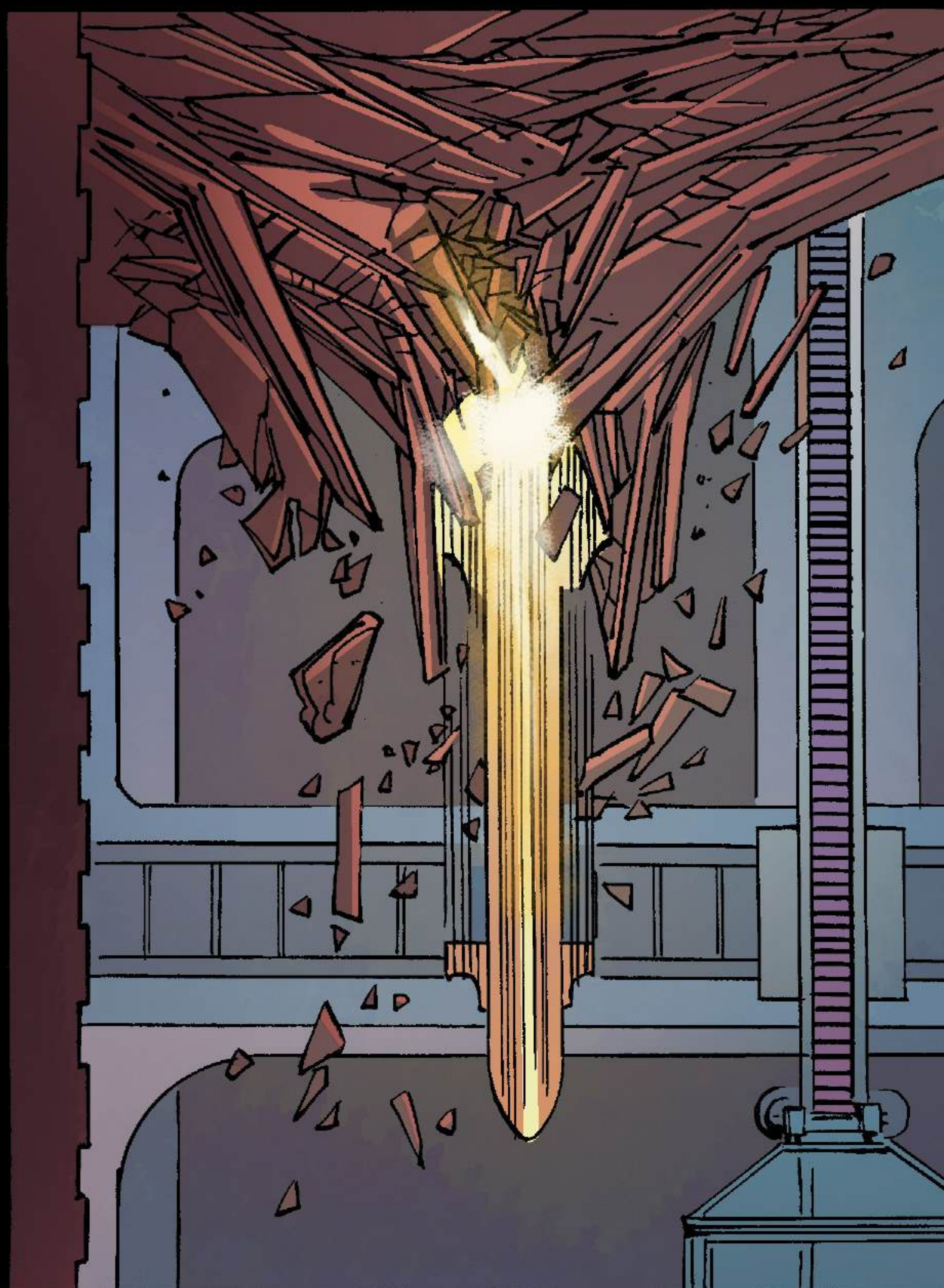
NO TIME
YET, SIR.
THE KNIGHT
IS GOING FOR
CAPTAIN
H'RHAM.

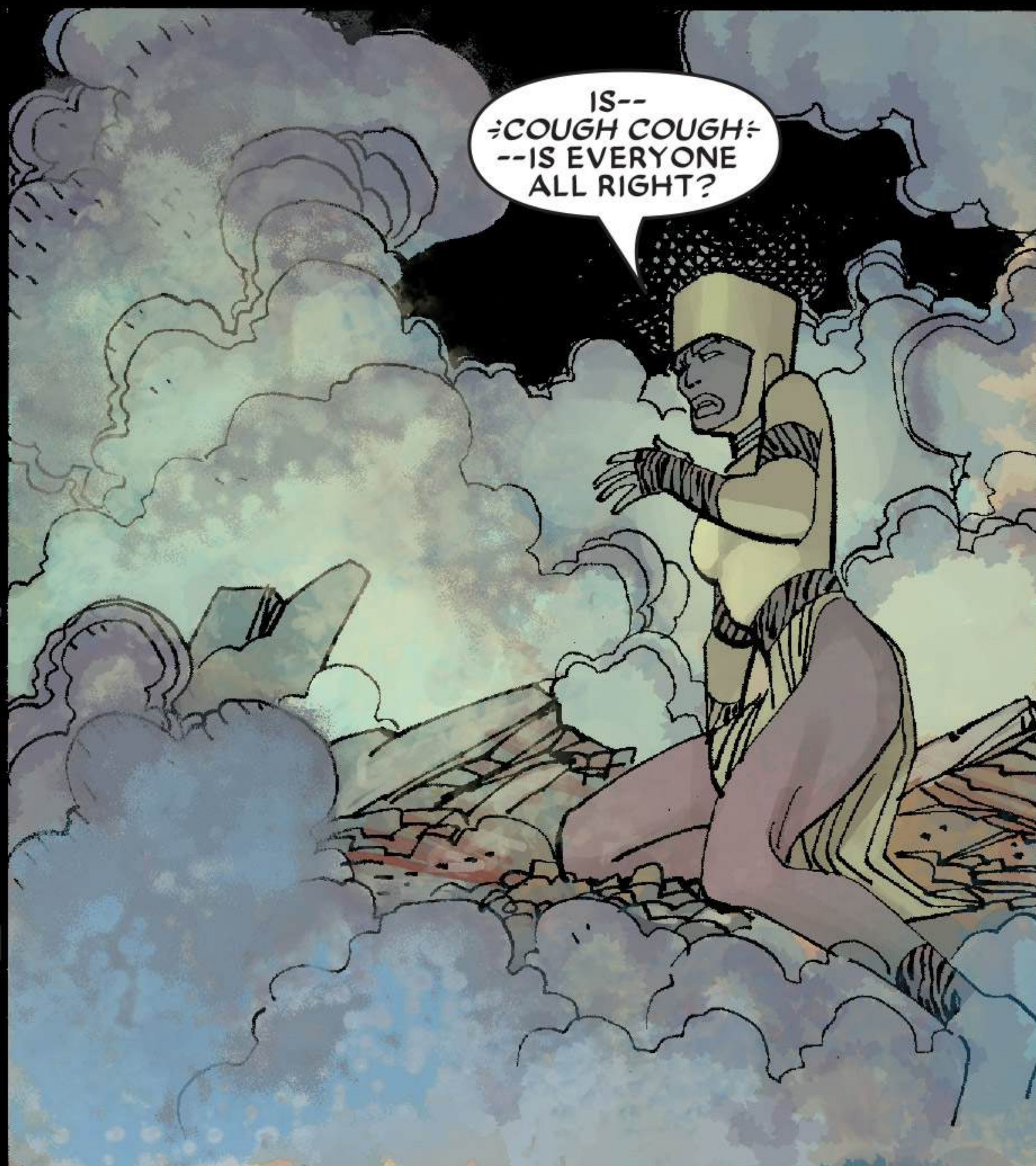






BREEEEEBREEEE







WHAT IS THAT?



A MANNED SHIP. IT MUST BE WHAT FELL.

MAYBE HIS RADIO STILL WORKS-- I'LL CALL FOR HELP.



DON'T WORRY, I'VE GOT A WRENCH IF THERE'S TROUBLE...

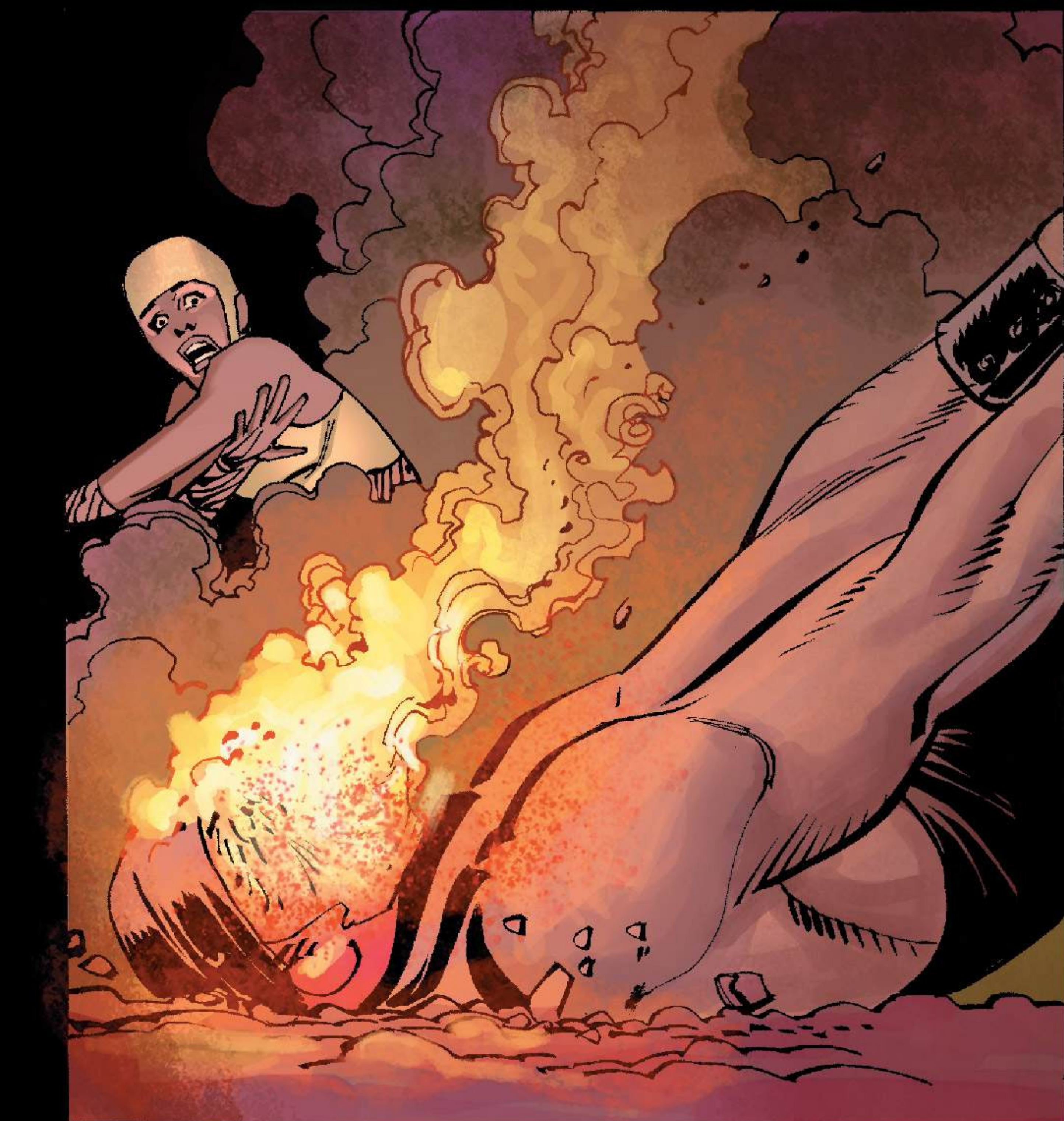
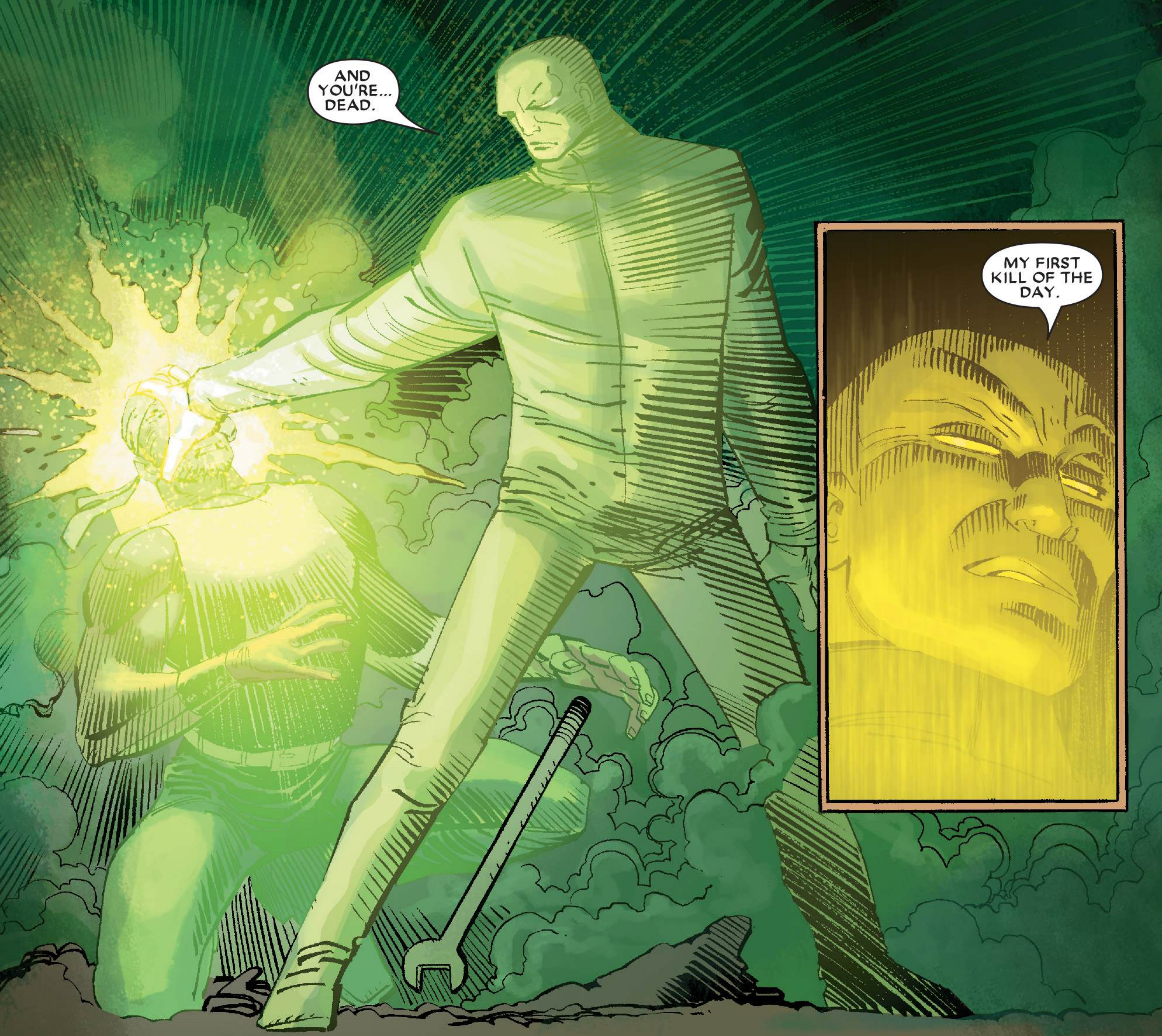
NO!



YOU THERE--SIR! ARE YOU ALRIGHT?



YOU'RE... GREEN.





SHOWTIME,
ROSS! REPORT TO
THE WAR ROOM
A.S.A.P.!

WHAT'S
UP?



YOUR
LITTLE FIELD
OF SPECIALTY
JUST GOT
HOT.

JELLO
SHOTS?



....THEY'RE USING NEIGHBORING
NIGANDA AS A LAUNCHING PAD
FOR THEIR INVASION OF WAKANDA,
BUT WE'RE CERTAIN THE NIGANDANS
DON'T HAVE THE STONES TO PULL
THIS ONE OFF ON THEIR
OWN.

THEN
WHO IS
BEHIND
IT?

THE MEN
ARE BEING LED BY
PROFESSIONAL MERCENARIES
EMPLOYED BY ULYSSES KLAU, A
HIGH-LEVEL BELGIAN ASSASSIN.



THERE IS NO WAY A BUNCH OF
WAFFLE-MAKERS ARE GOING
TO PLAY US OUT OF POSITION
IN WAKANDA! WE NEED TO
SEND IN SUPPORT TROOPS TO
AID OUR WAKANDAN ALLIES
RIGHT AWAY!

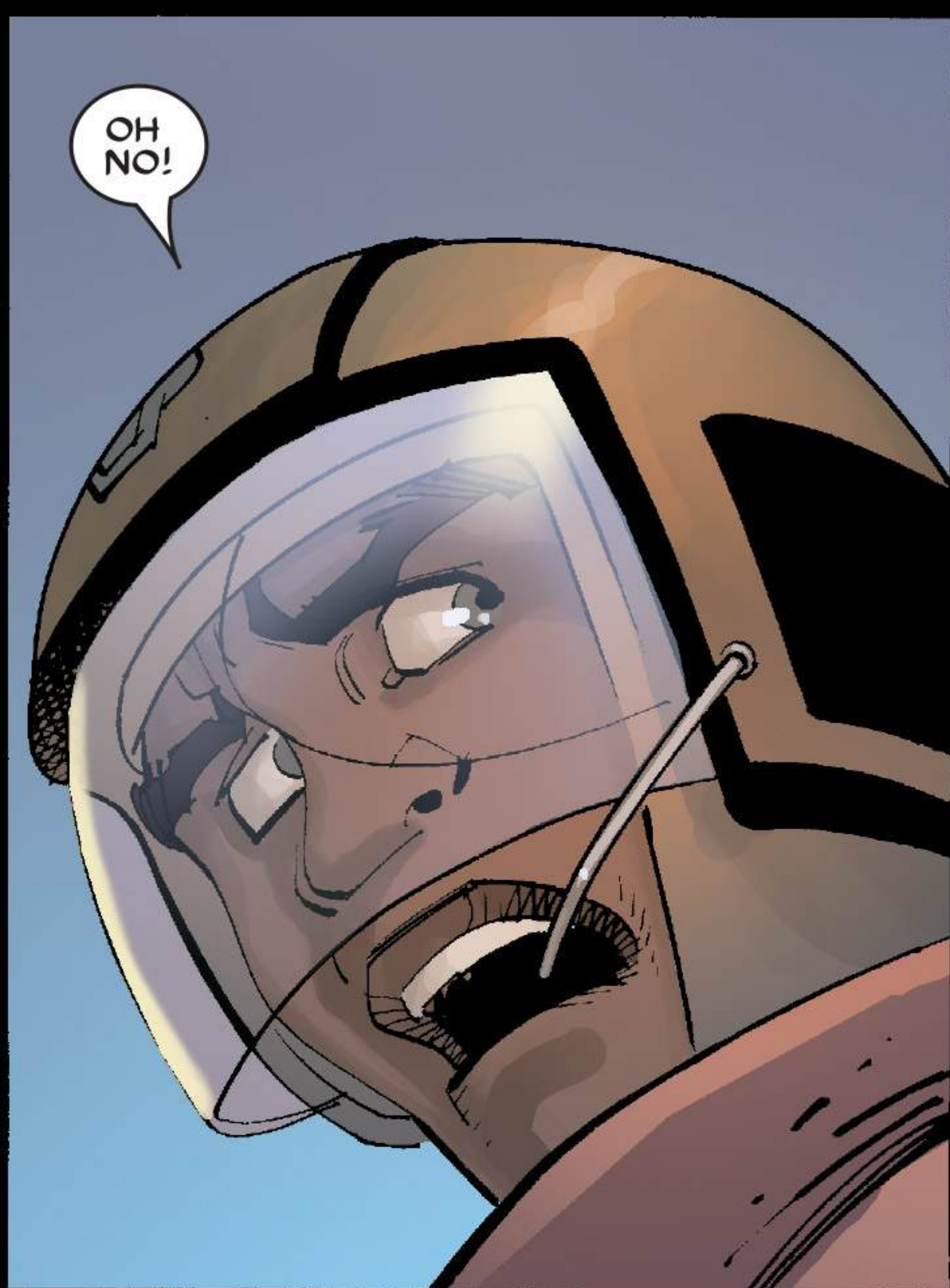
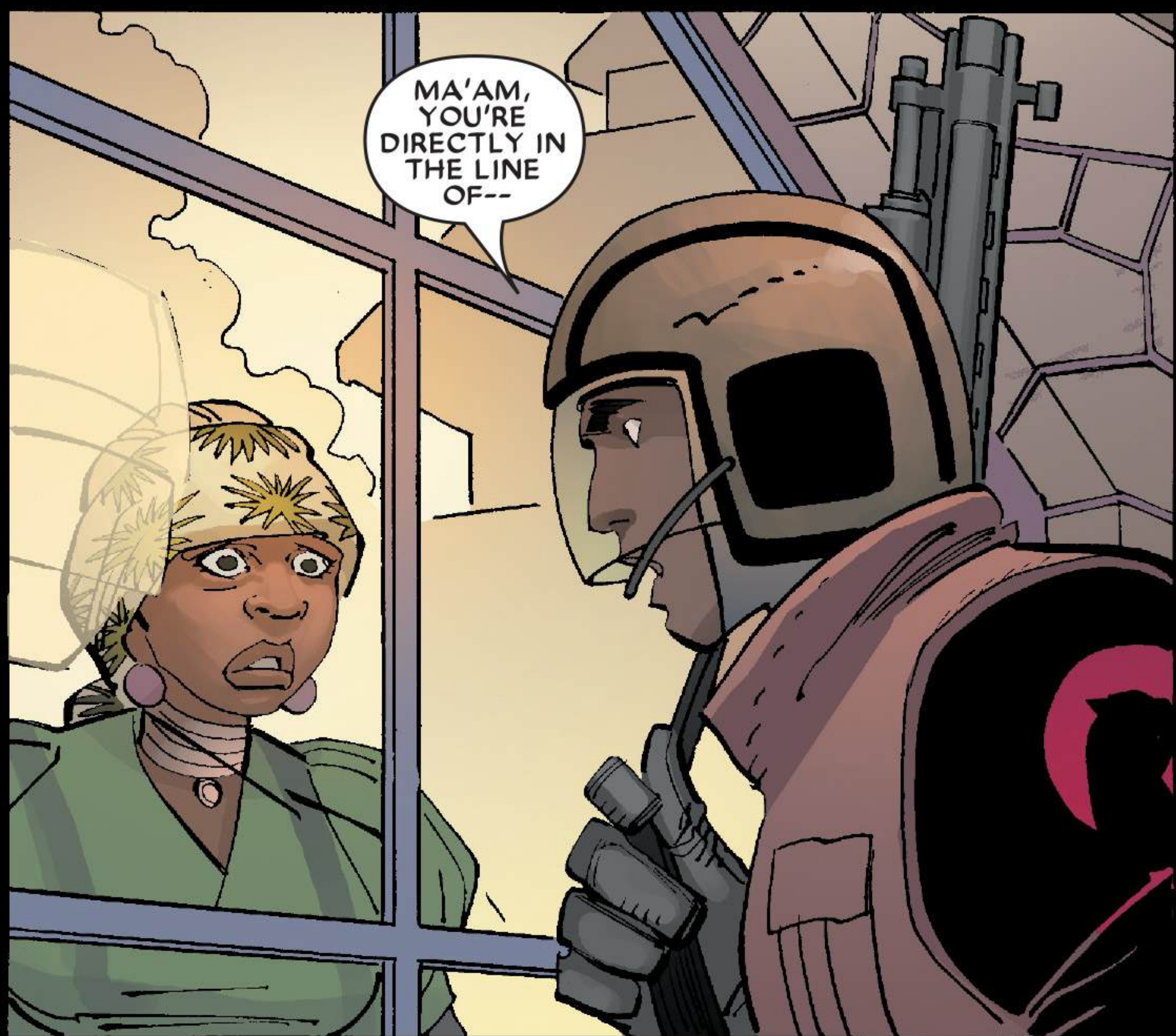
AND
WHERE ARE THOSE
TROOPS COMING FROM?
OUR TROOPS ARE SPREAD
TOO THIN ALREADY. WE JUST
DON'T HAVE ENOUGH BODIES.



OH, THAT'S THE ONE THING
WE HAVE PLENTY OF. WE'VE
GOT MORE THAN ENOUGH
BODIES TO INVA--I MEAN,
ASSIST WAKANDA!



TERRY
DODSON
RACHEL
WHITE

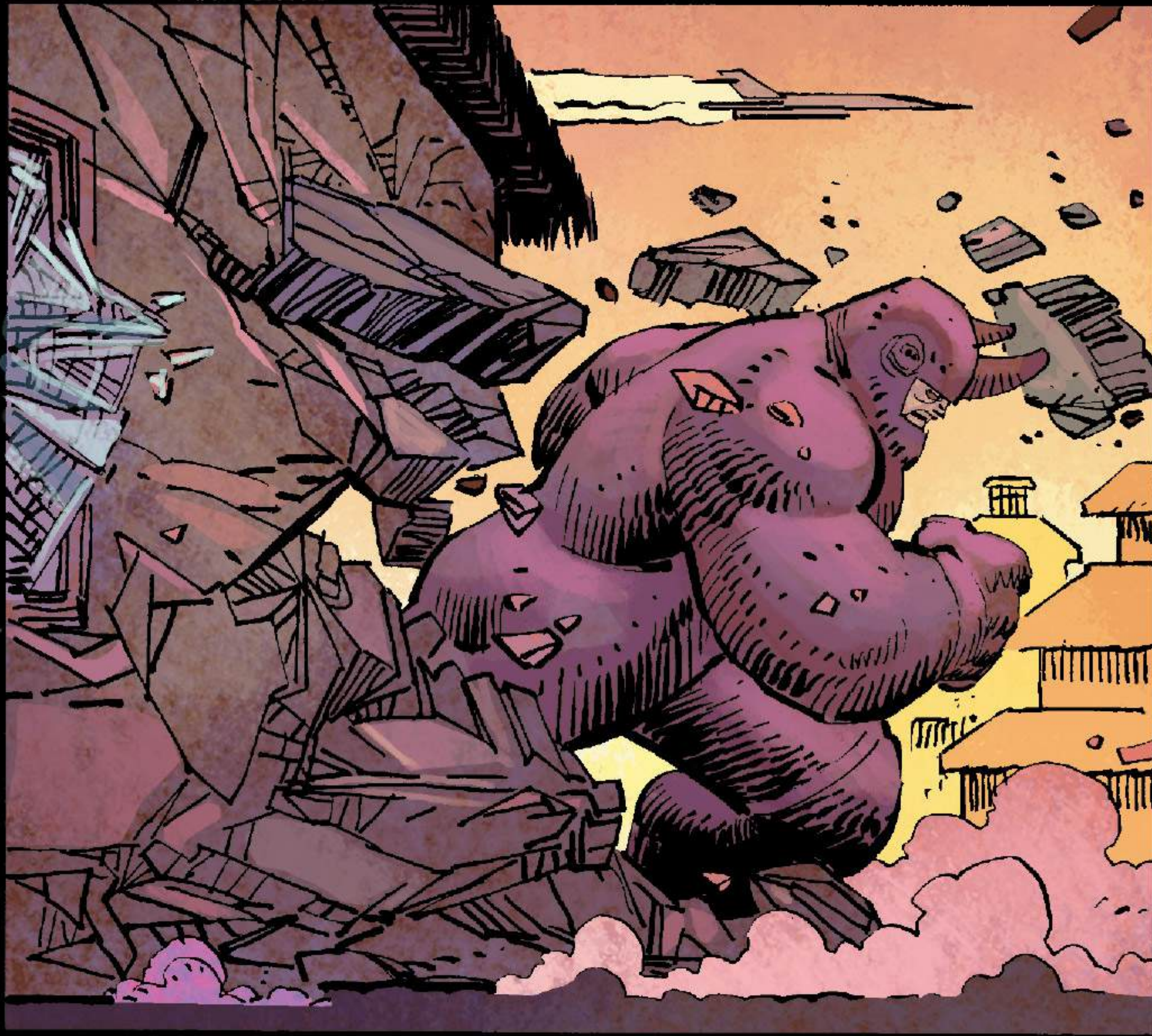




MY
WORD!

WHO IS THE BLACK PANTHER?

PART
FIVE





YEEE-OW!
THAT WAS
DIFFERENT!



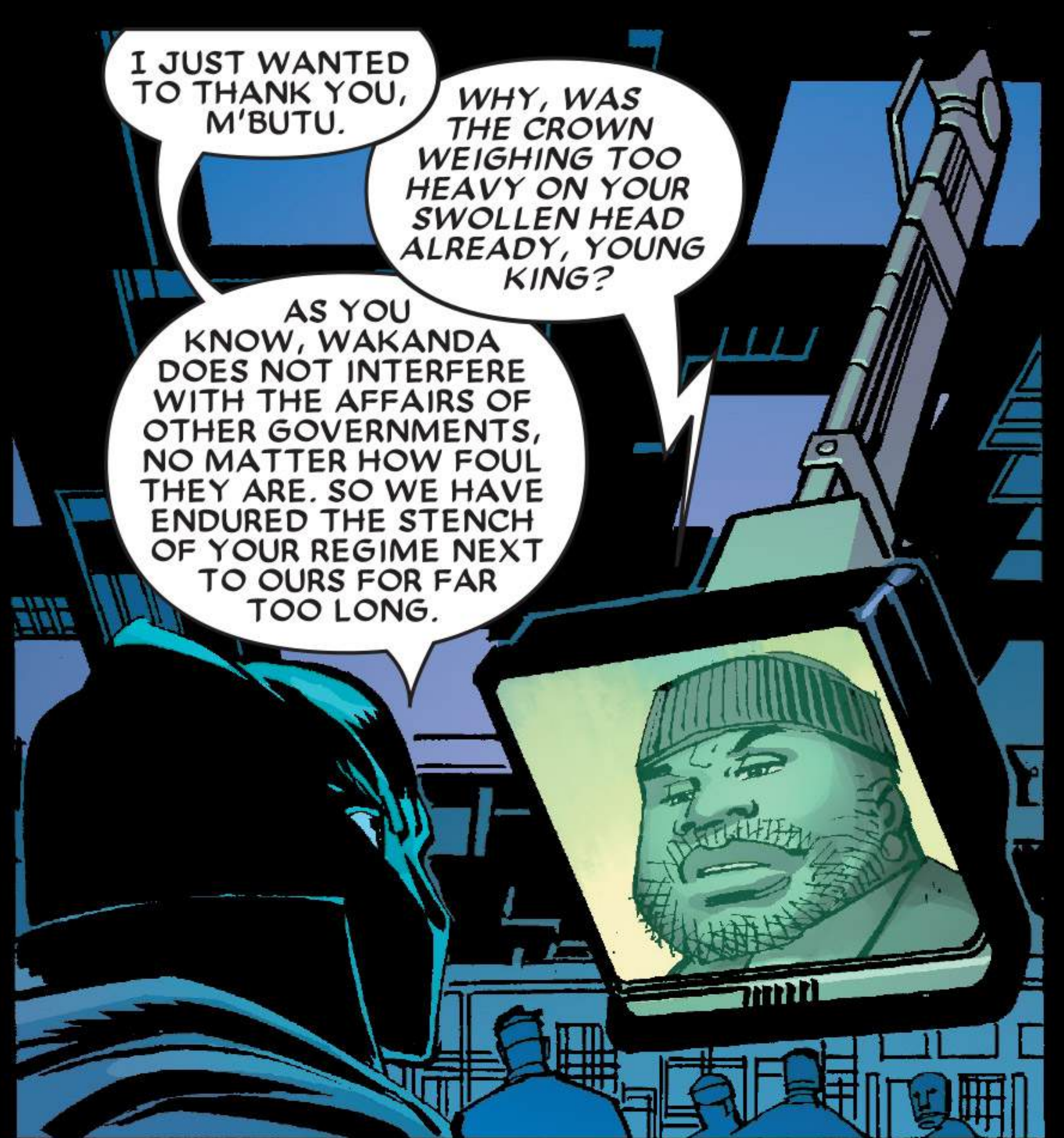
SIR! SEVERAL BATTALIONS OF
TROOPS ARE POURING IN FROM
NIGANDA, FOLLOWING THE
PATH THE RHINO PUNCHED
INTO OUR DEFENSES.



HOW MANY FIGHTERS
DO WE HAVE IN THE
AIR NOW?

A DOZEN,
WITH MORE ON
THE WAY.

HAVE THREE
FOCUS ON THE RHINO.
POUND HIM WITH MISSILES
UNTIL HE DROPS. SEND THE
REST TO TAKE OUT THAT
COLUMN FROM NIGANDA.
AND GET M'BUTU ON
THE PHONE.



I JUST WANTED
TO THANK YOU,
M'BUTU.

WHY, WAS
THE CROWN
WEIGHING TOO
HEAVY ON YOUR
SWOLLEN HEAD
ALREADY, YOUNG
KING?

AS YOU
KNOW, WAKANDA
DOES NOT INTERFERE
WITH THE AFFAIRS OF
OTHER GOVERNMENTS,
NO MATTER HOW FOUL
THEY ARE. SO WE HAVE
ENDURED THE STENCH
OF YOUR REGIME NEXT
TO OURS FOR FAR
TOO LONG.

WE HOPED THE PEOPLE WHO SUFFERED
UNDER YOUR KLEPTOCRACY WOULD RISE
UP AND BEHEAD YOU. BUT NOW YOU'VE
GIVEN US AN EXCUSE TO DO IT.

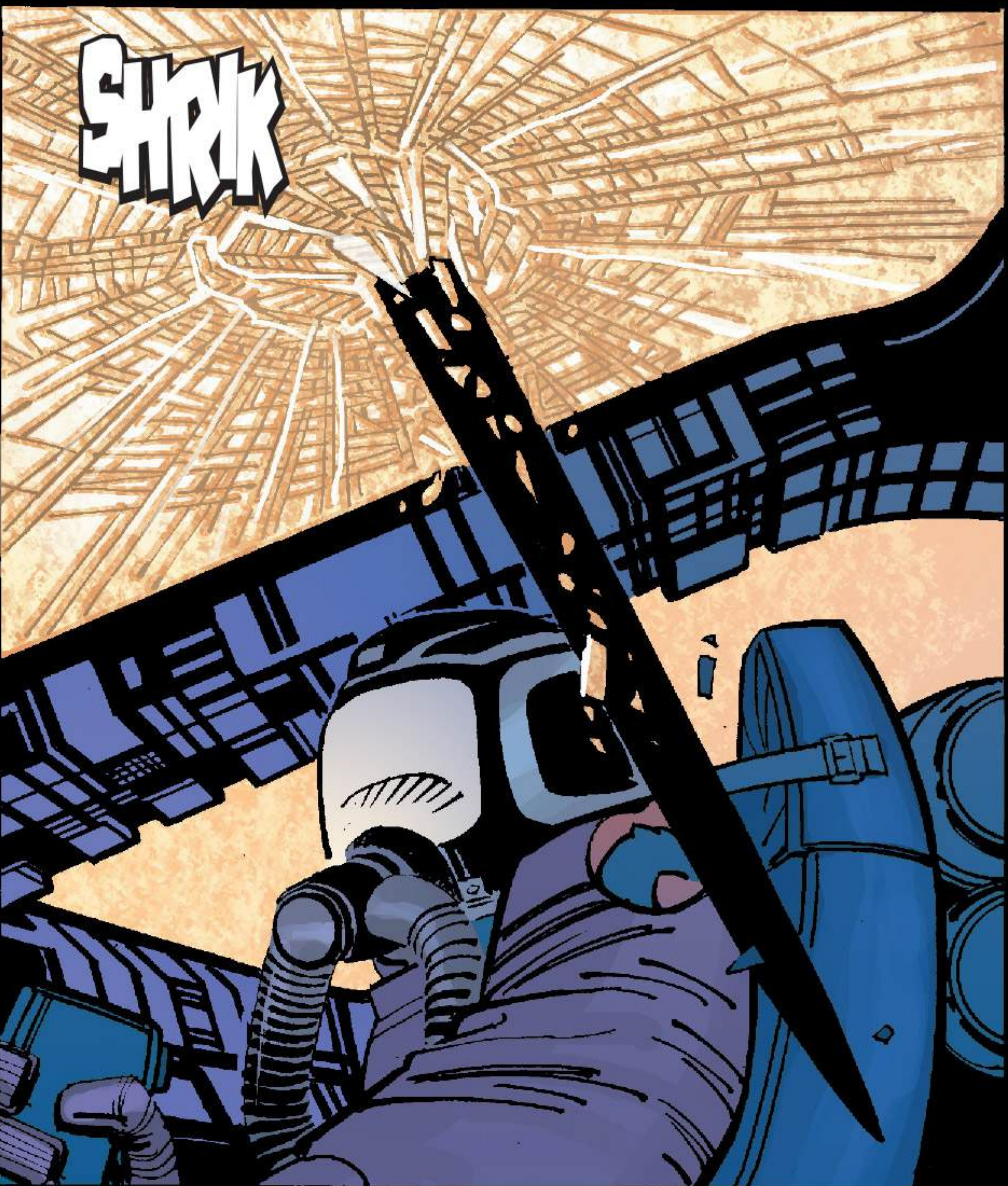
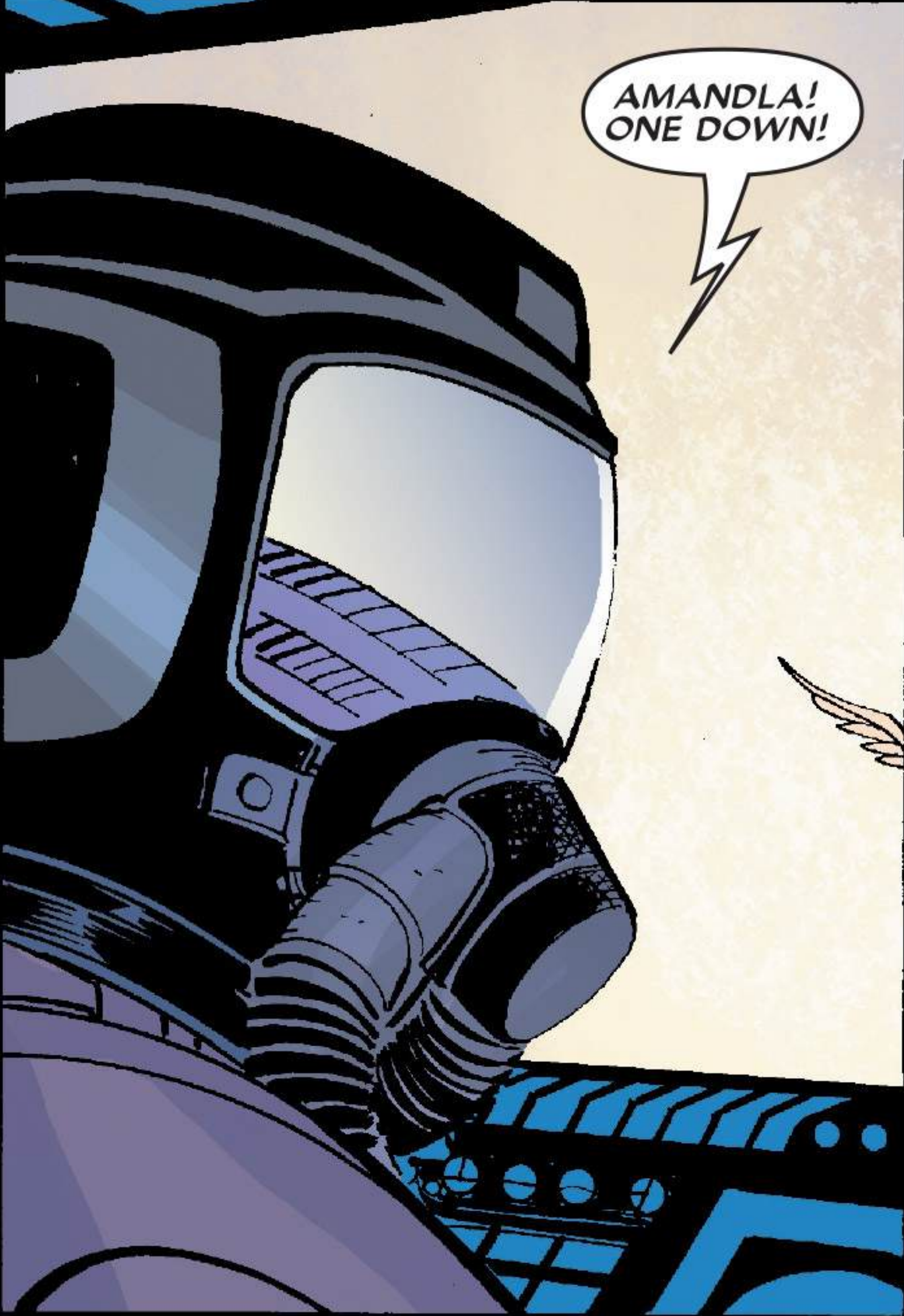
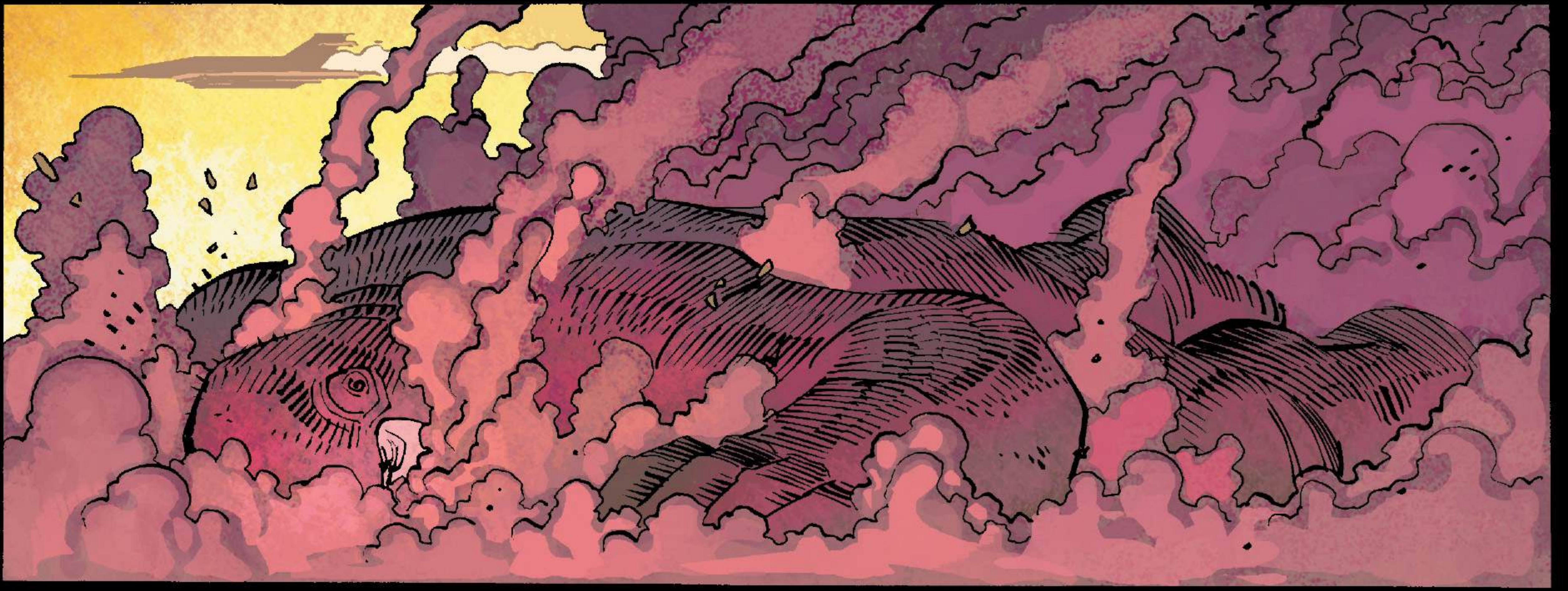
YOU'RE
NOT HALF THE
MAN YOUR FATHER
WAS--AND KLAU KILLED
HIM! I'LL BE SPITTING
ON YOUR GRAVE,
T'CHALLA!

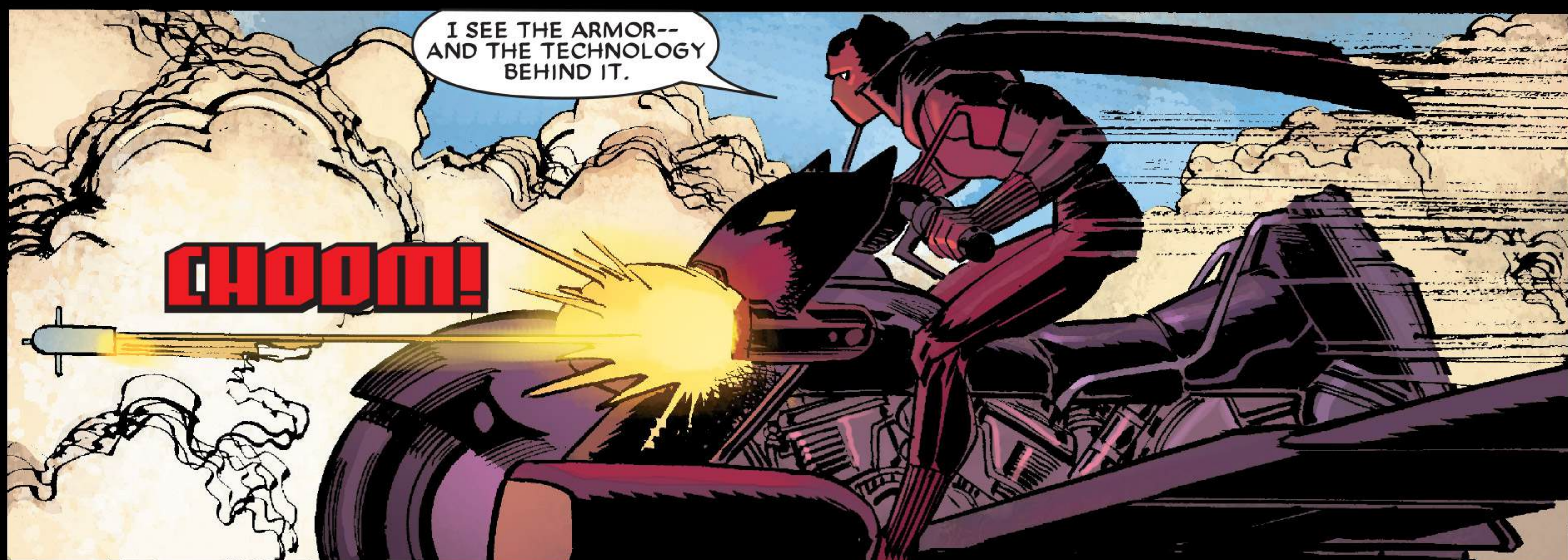
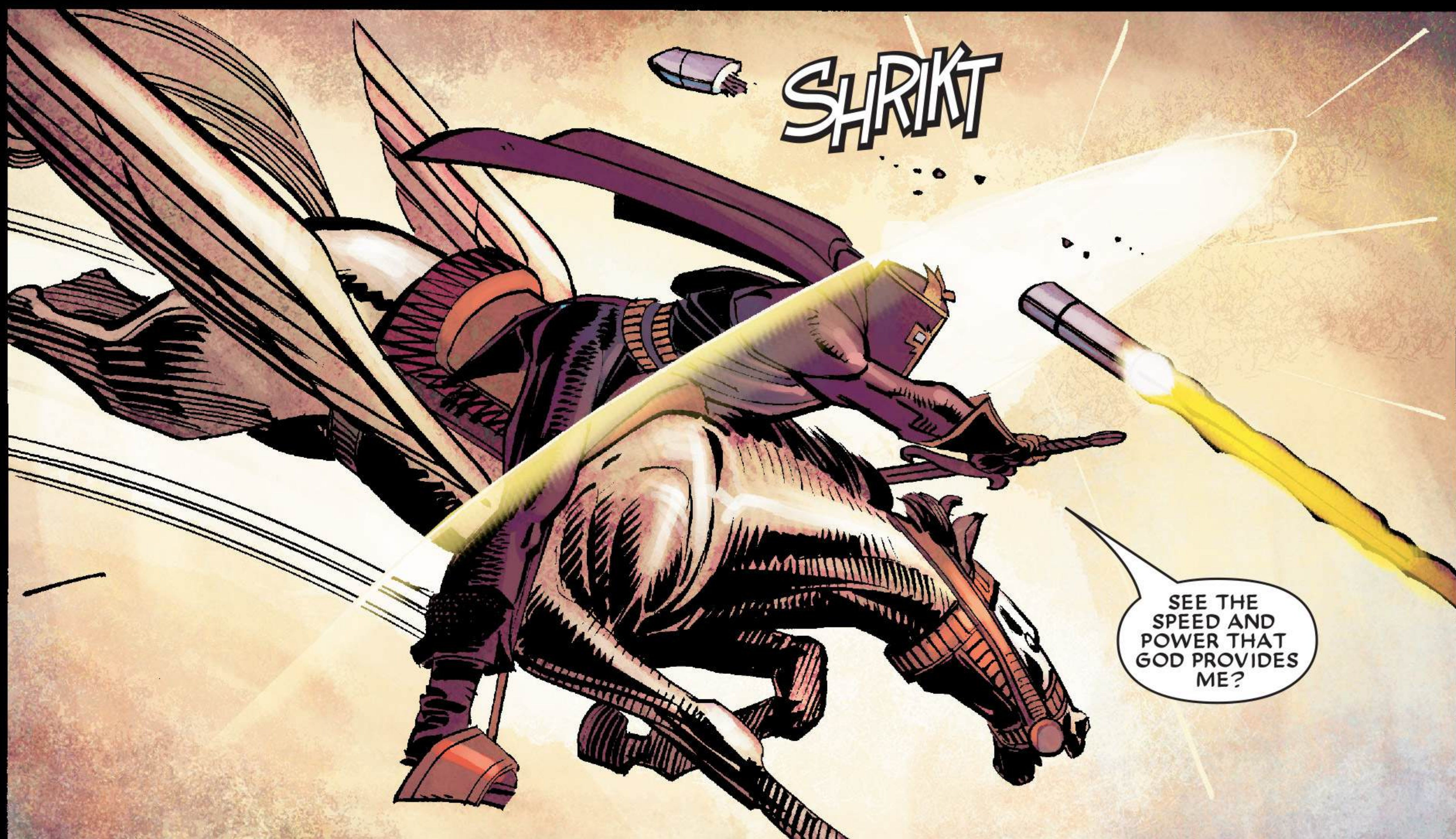


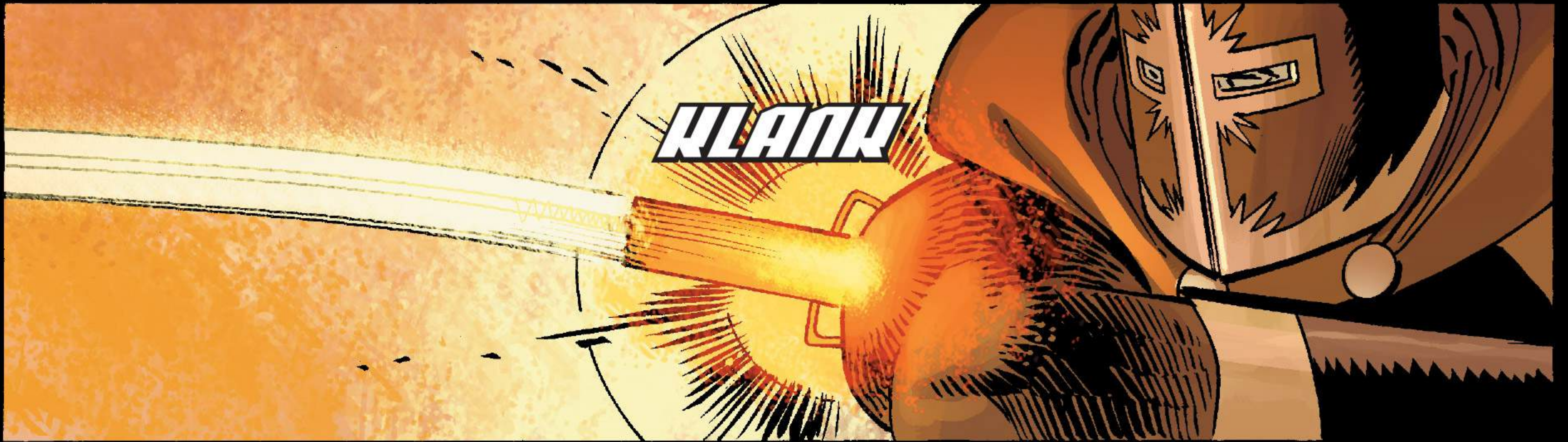
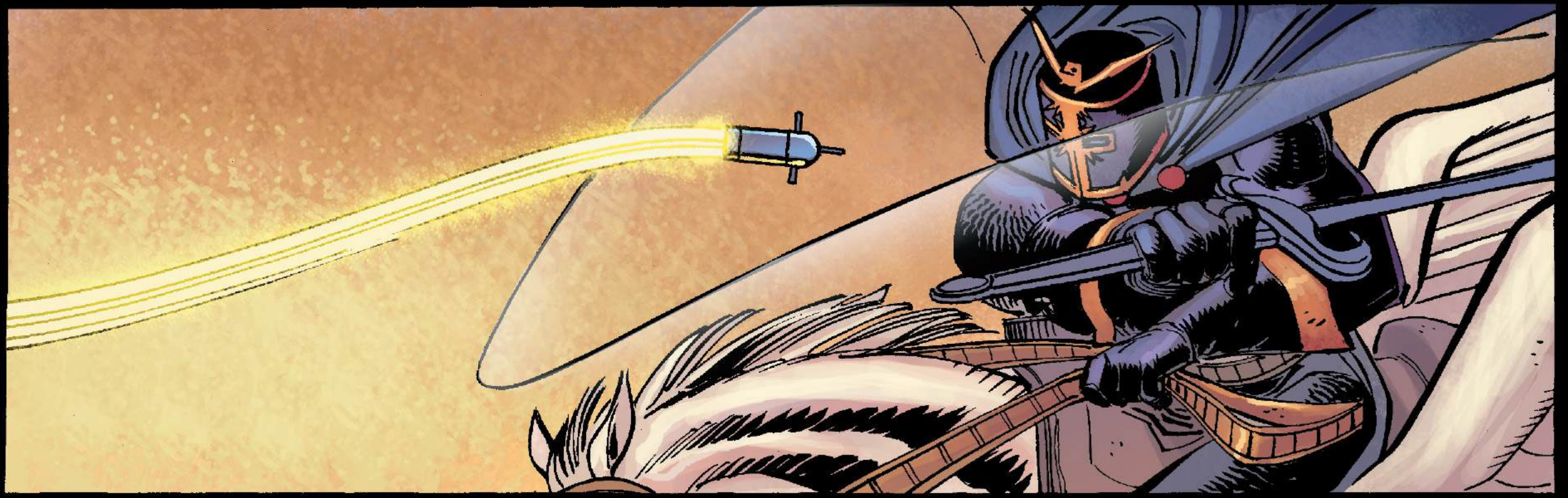


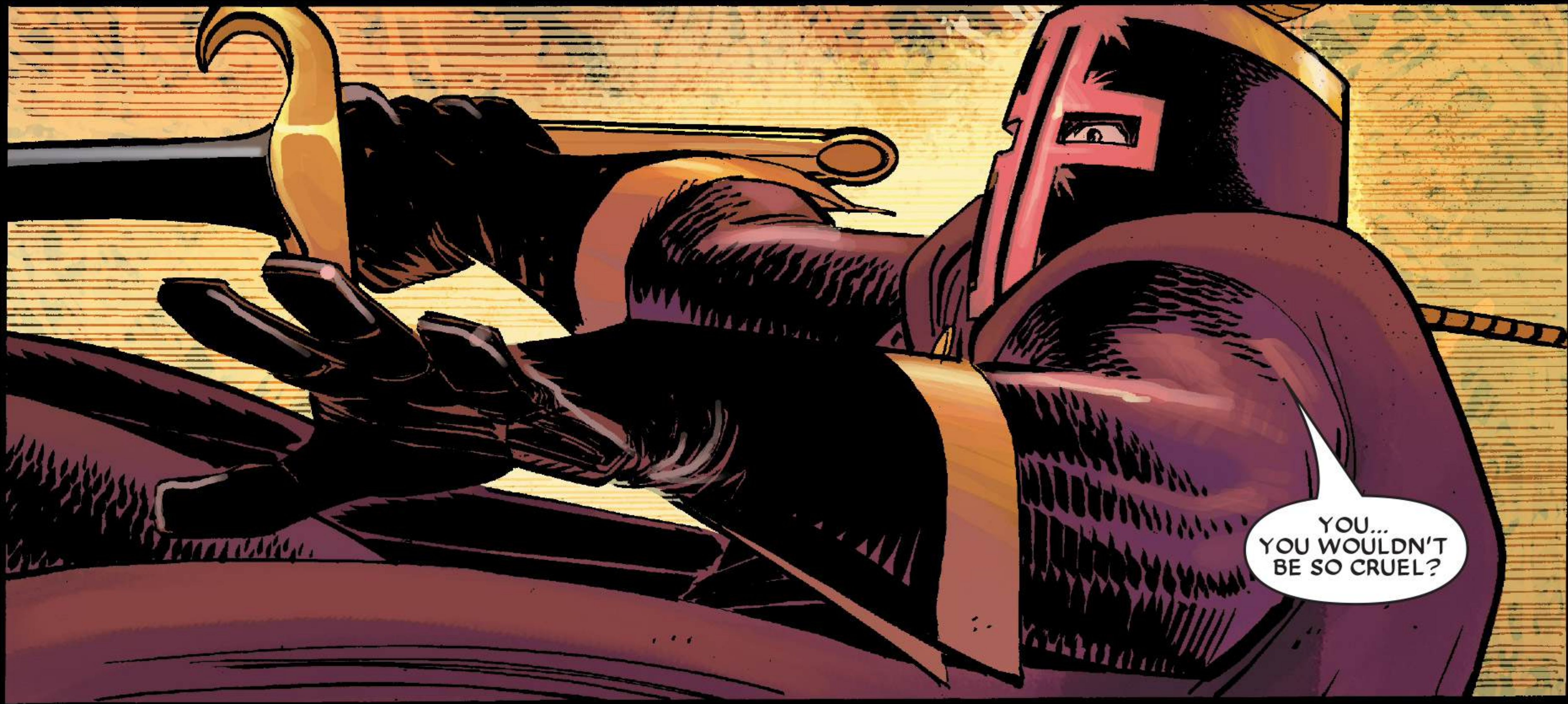










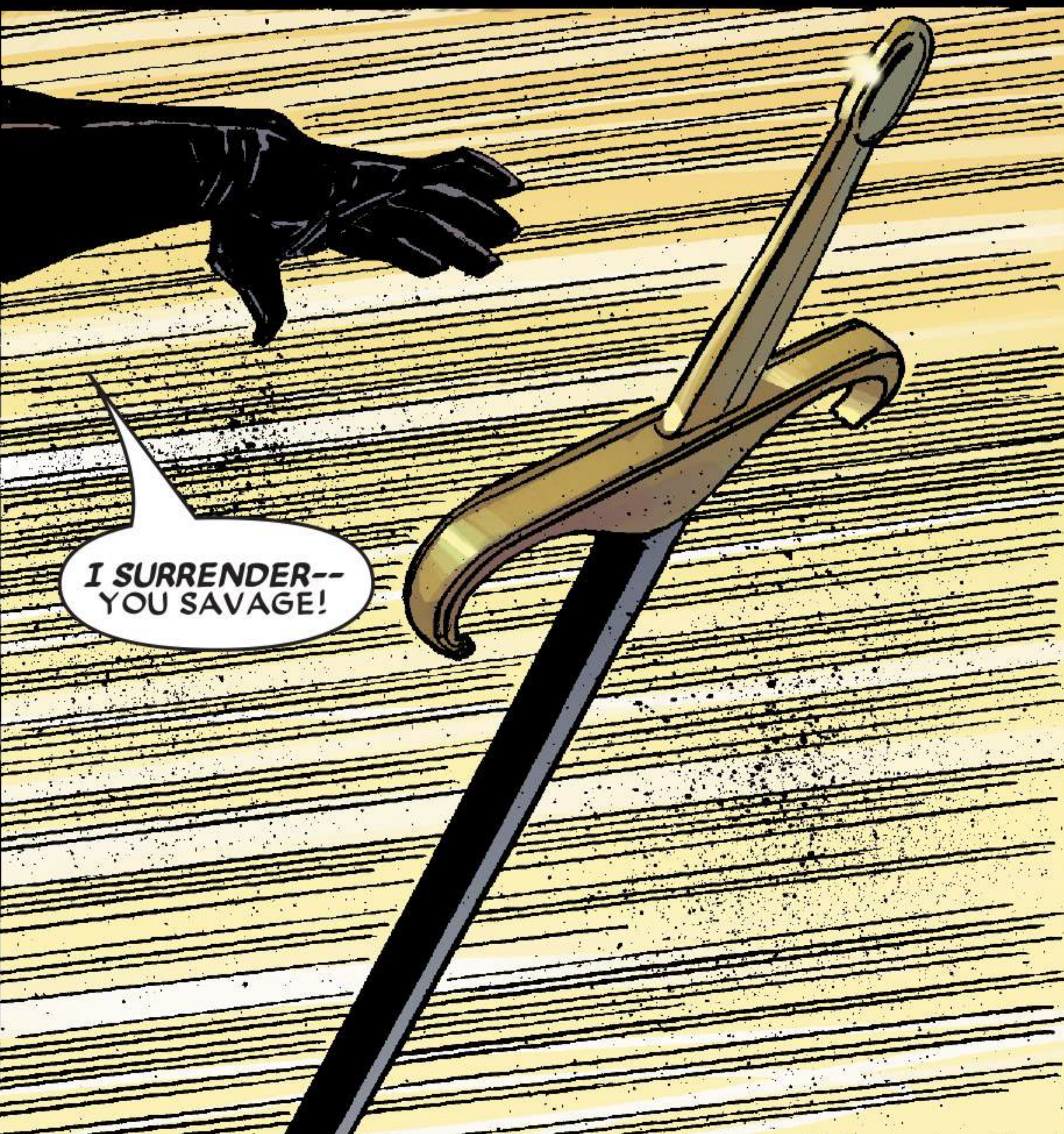


YOU...
YOU WOULDN'T
BE SO CRUEL?

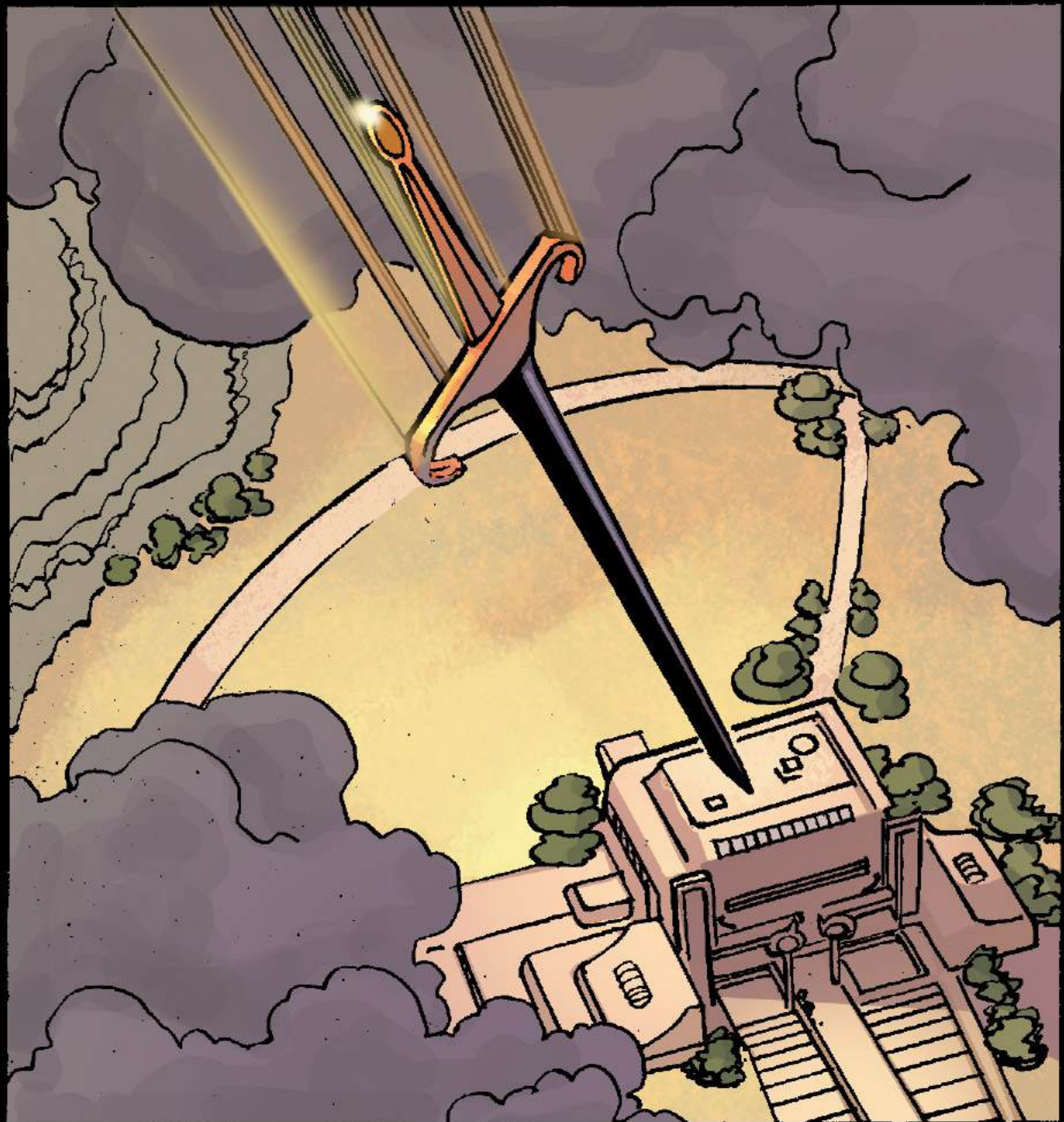


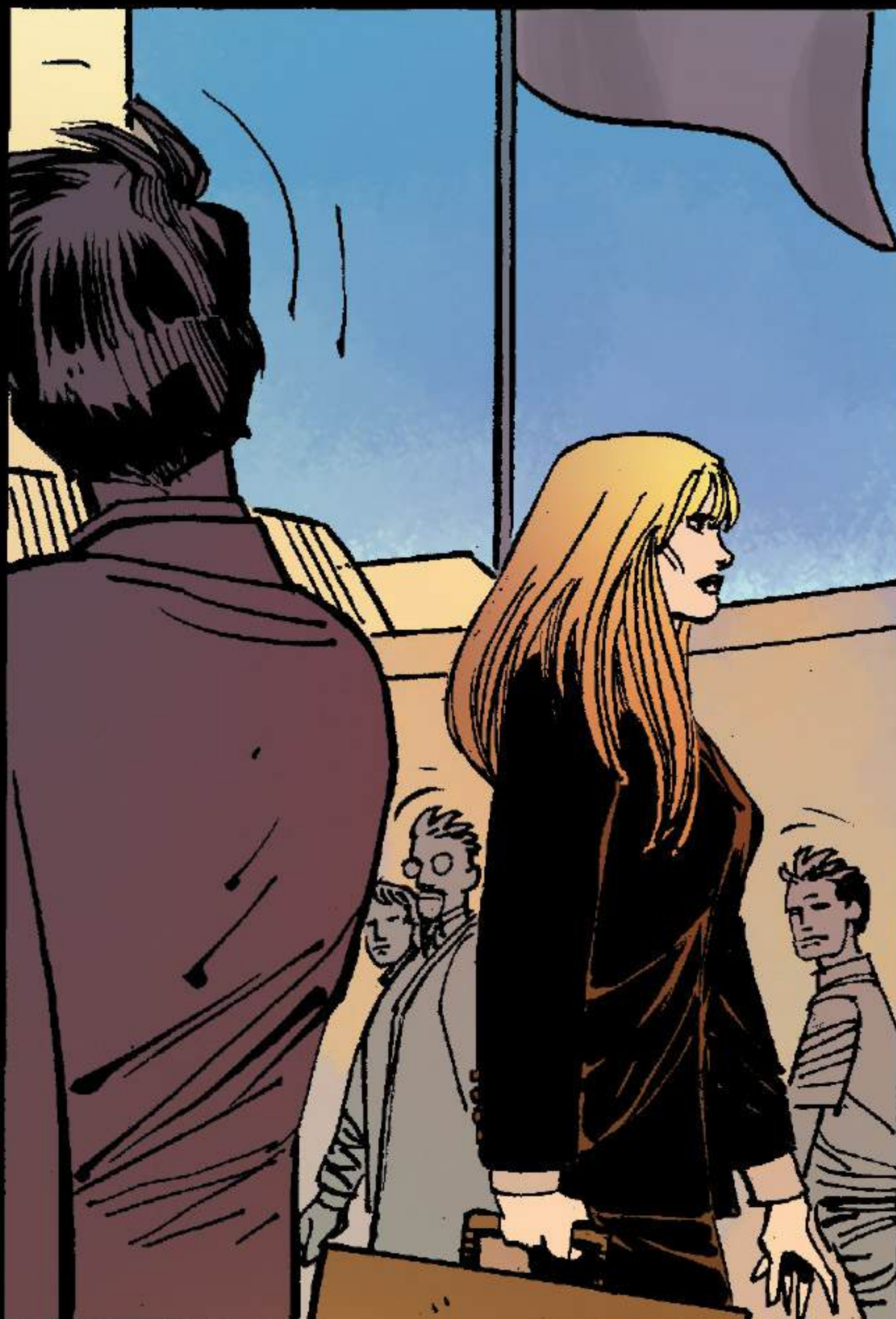
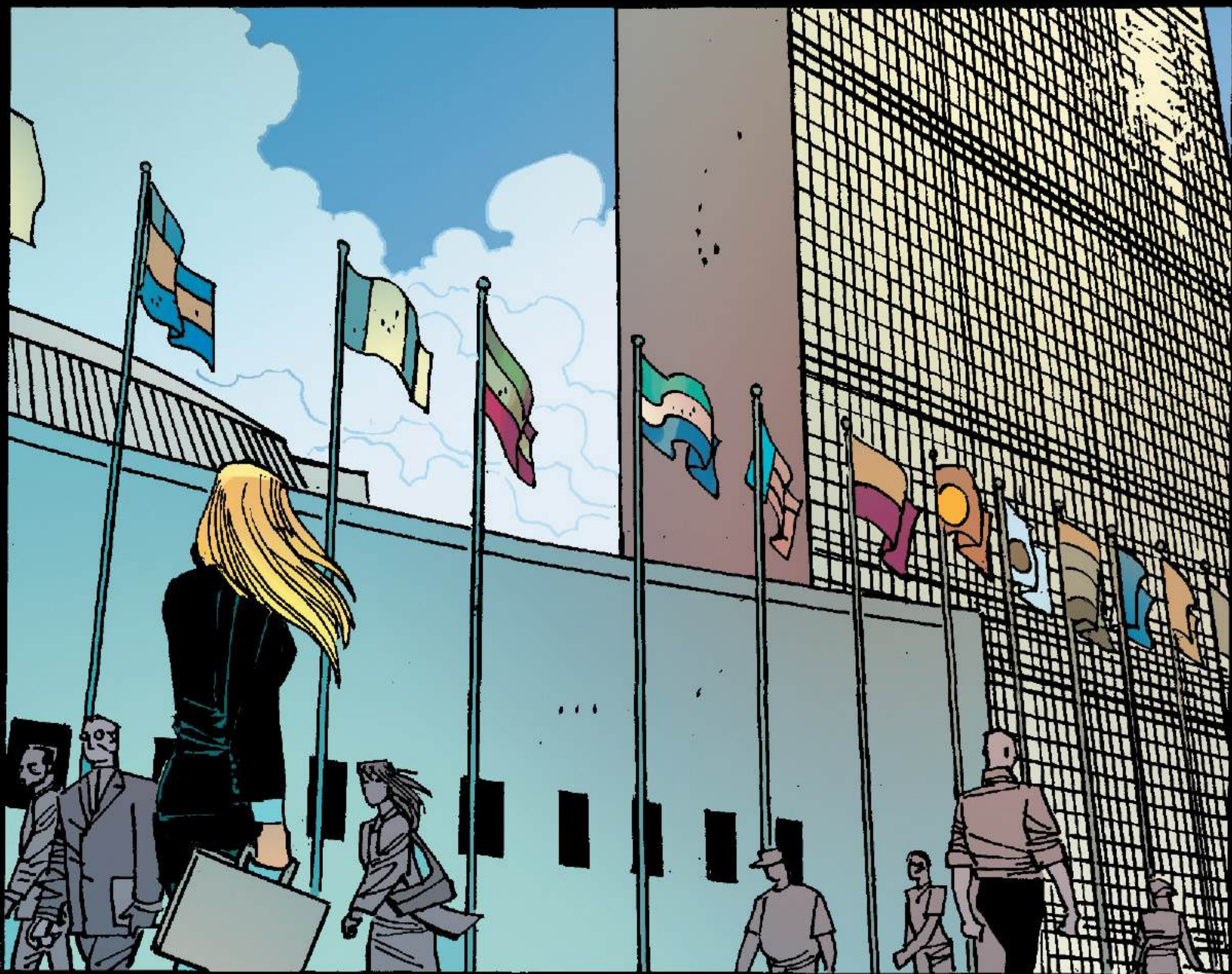
TARGET
ENGAGED.

PREPARING
TO FI--



I SURRENDER--
YOU SAVAGE!





OF COURSE
THE AMERICANS
WERE BEHIND IT!
WHO ELSE?



I'M
JUST SAYING,
BEFORE YOU MAKE
ACCUSATIONS IN FRONT
OF THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY--



EXCUSE ME, AMBASSADOR
T'SHAN? I MUST TO SPEAK
WITH YOU!

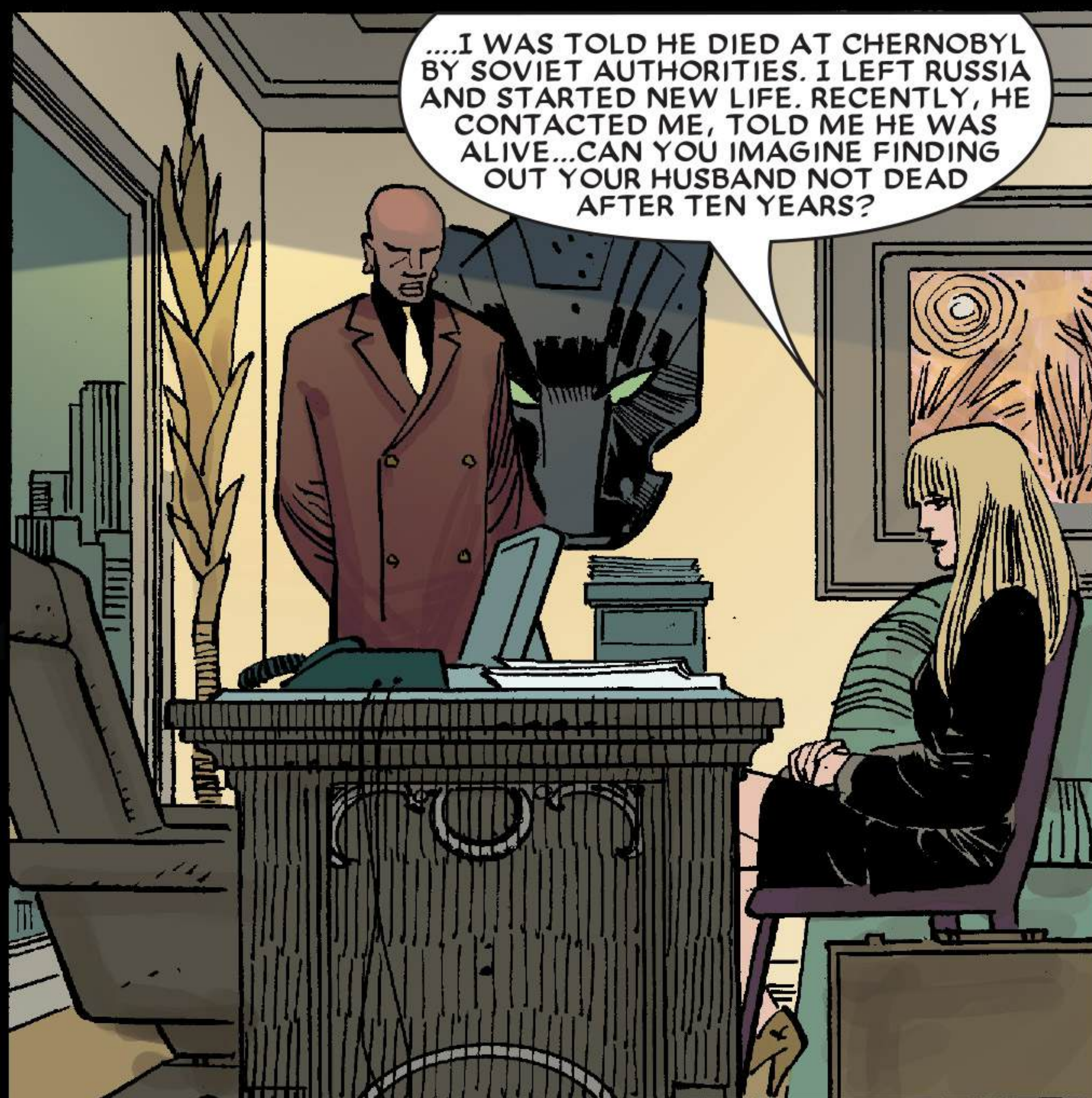
MISS,
I DON'T HAVE
TIME TO TALK WITH
YOU NOW. THERE'S
A CRISIS--

BUT
THAT IS WHAT
I'M HERE TO TALK
ABOUT. I CAN HELP
END THE INVASION
OF WAKANDA.



HOW DO YOU KNOW
ABOUT THAT? IT'S
NOT PUBLIC
INFORMATION.

CAN WE
DISCUSS THIS--
PRIVATELY?



....I WAS TOLD HE DIED AT CHERNOBYL BY SOVIET AUTHORITIES. I LEFT RUSSIA AND STARTED NEW LIFE. RECENTLY, HE CONTACTED ME, TOLD ME HE WAS ALIVE...CAN YOU IMAGINE FINDING OUT YOUR HUSBAND NOT DEAD AFTER TEN YEARS?



CALM DOWN, MISS...



IGOR SAID HE WAS ALIVE, AND SOON HE'D HAVE MONEY TO AFFORD CURE FOR HIS CONDITION SO WE COULD BE TOGETHER AGAIN. THAT'S WHY THEY TOLD ME HE WAS DEAD. THEY TURNED HIM INTO RADIOACTIVE MAN.



THE RADIOACTIVE MAN?!



DA. YOU'VE HEARD OF HIM?

YES, HE'S.... ARE YOU SAYING YOU CAN STOP HIM?

I DON'T TRUST PEOPLE HE'S WORKING FOR. BUT IF I HELP YOU, YOUR PEOPLE CAN CURE HIM, DA?



YOU THE INTELLIGENCE GUY THEY JUST CHOPPERED IN?



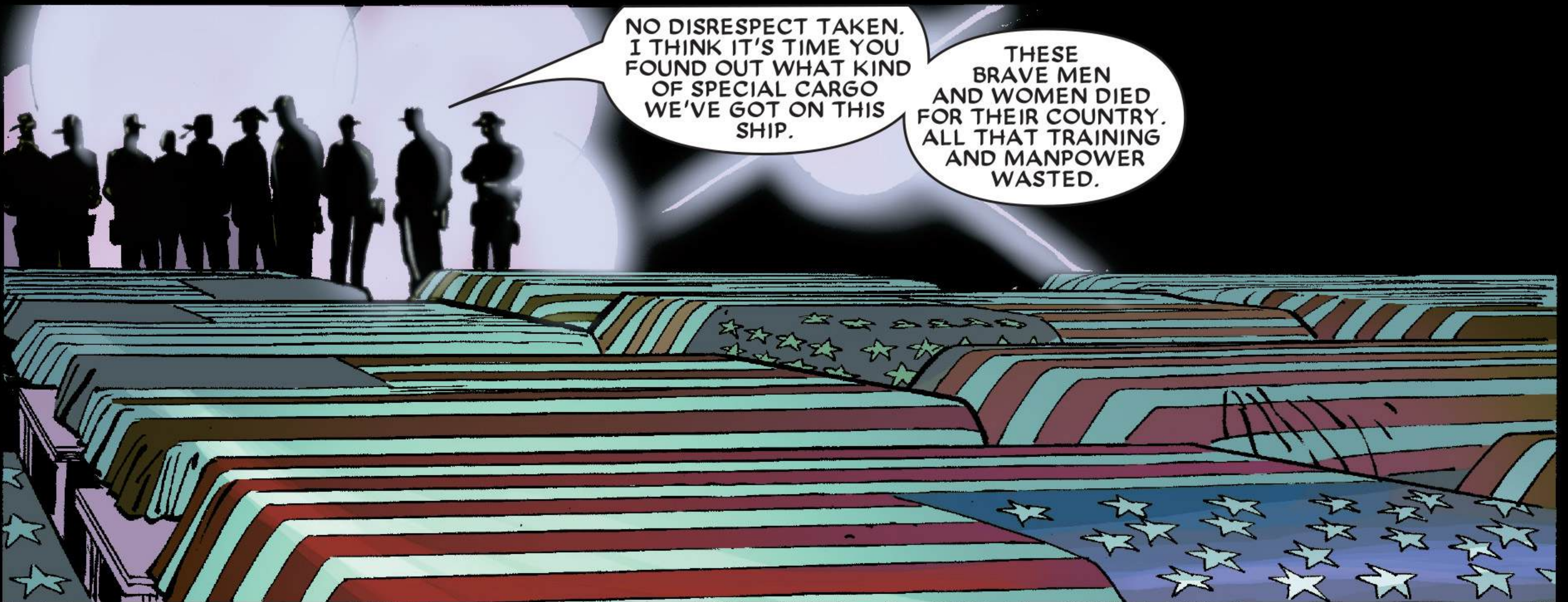
UH YES SIR. EVERETT ROSS. STATE DEPARTMENT.

GOOD. YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO HELP US PICK TARGETS.

WELL, GIVEN THAT YOU'RE ENTERING A BATTLE BETWEEN SUPER-POWERED COMBATANTS AS WELL AS THE NIGANDAN AND WAKANDAN ARMIES, IT'S GOING TO TAKE A LOT MORE THAN A NAVY SEAL TEAM TO SECURE THE MOST COMBAT-READY PEOPLE ON EARTH.



NO DISRESPECT, SIR, I JUST DON'T WANT TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANOTHER MOGADISHU.



NO DISRESPECT TAKEN. I THINK IT'S TIME YOU FOUND OUT WHAT KIND OF SPECIAL CARGO WE'VE GOT ON THIS SHIP.

THESE BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN DIED FOR THEIR COUNTRY. ALL THAT TRAINING AND MANPOWER WASTED.



THE MILITARY HATES WASTE.



WE'VE FOUND A SOLUTION TO OUR MANPOWER PROBLEM. THEY'RE TOUGHER, STRONGER, FEARLESS, TAKE ORDERS EXACTLY AND DON'T DO INTERVIEWS OR WRITE SAD LETTERS BACK HOME.

IT'S THE ULTIMATE RECYCLING. PLUS THEY'RE SOLAR-POWERED.

VERY, UH, ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS OF YOU.



TIME TO MOVE OUT, YOU ZOMBIES!

HOW ARE THEY ENTERING WAKANDA?



WE CAN'T SAIL ANY FURTHER WITHOUT THE U.S. BEING OFFICIALLY DRAWN INTO THE CONFLICT. AND WE DON'T WANT TO BE THAT VISIBLE AT THIS STAGE.



SO THEY'LL JUST WALK TO SHORE.

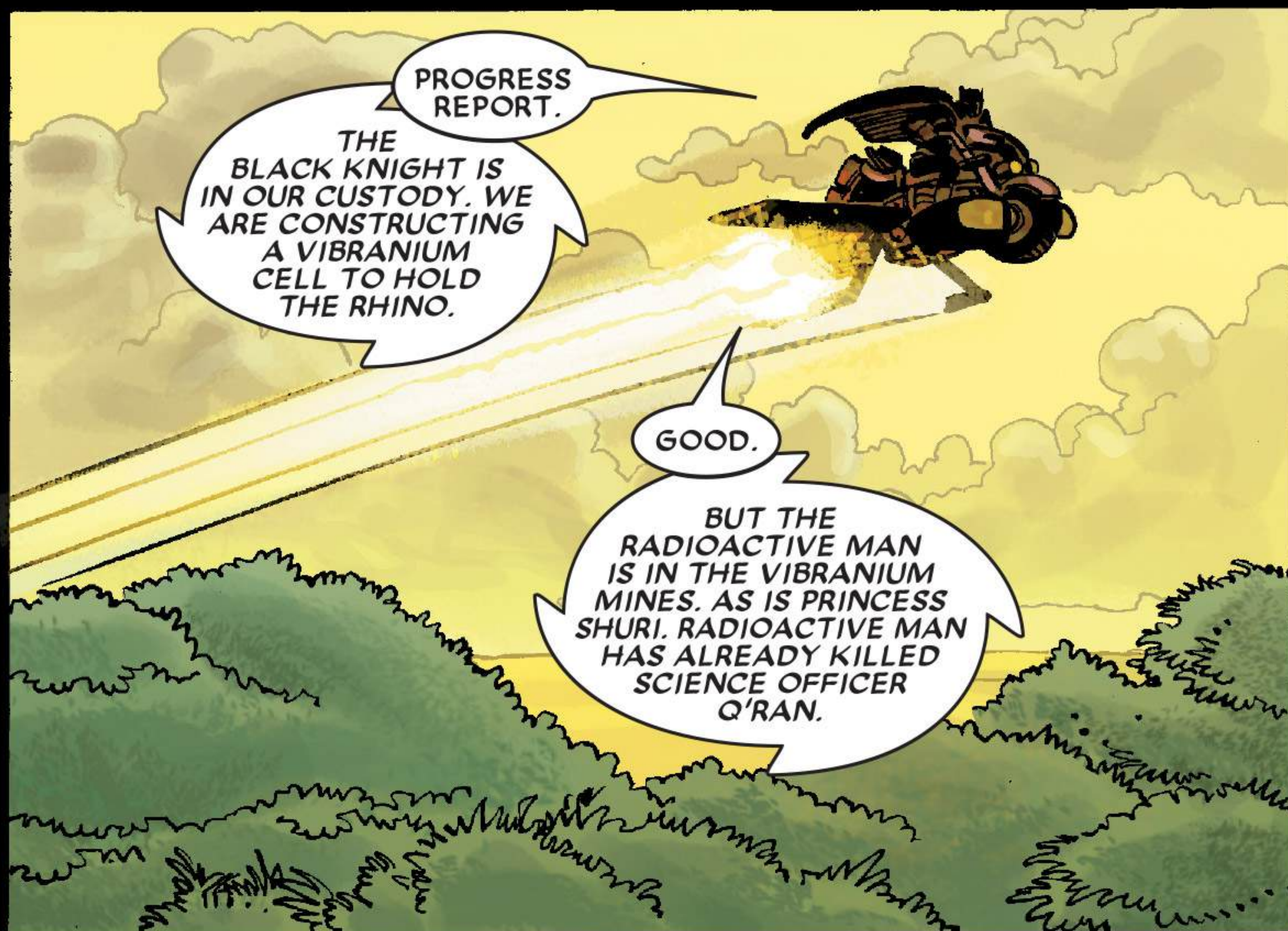


GREAT IDEA. DID YOU GET THAT FROM THAT PIRATE MOVIE?

WHAT?

YOU KNOW, THE DISNEY ONE?

I HAVEN'T SEEN MY KIDS IN TWO YEARS.



PROGRESS
REPORT.

THE
BLACK KNIGHT IS
IN OUR CUSTODY. WE
ARE CONSTRUCTING
A VIBRANIUM
CELL TO HOLD
THE RHINO.

GOOD.

BUT THE
RADIOACTIVE MAN
IS IN THE VIBRANIUM
MINES. AS IS PRINCESS
SHURI. RADIOACTIVE MAN
HAS ALREADY KILLED
SCIENCE OFFICER
Q'LAN.



T'CHALLA....?



IS SHE
CURRENTLY IN
DANGER?

NO, SHE IS TRYING TO AVOID HIM.
SINCE THOSE ARE VERY CLOSE
QUARTERS, I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG
SHE CAN DO SO. THERE COULD ALSO BE
A CAVE-IN, AND WE DON'T KNOW
HOW FAR HIS PRESENCE
IRRADIATES--

--BUT WE
DO KNOW WHAT
HE'S DOING THERE.
HE'S GOING TO
DESTROY WAKANDA
USING THE
VIBRANIUM!



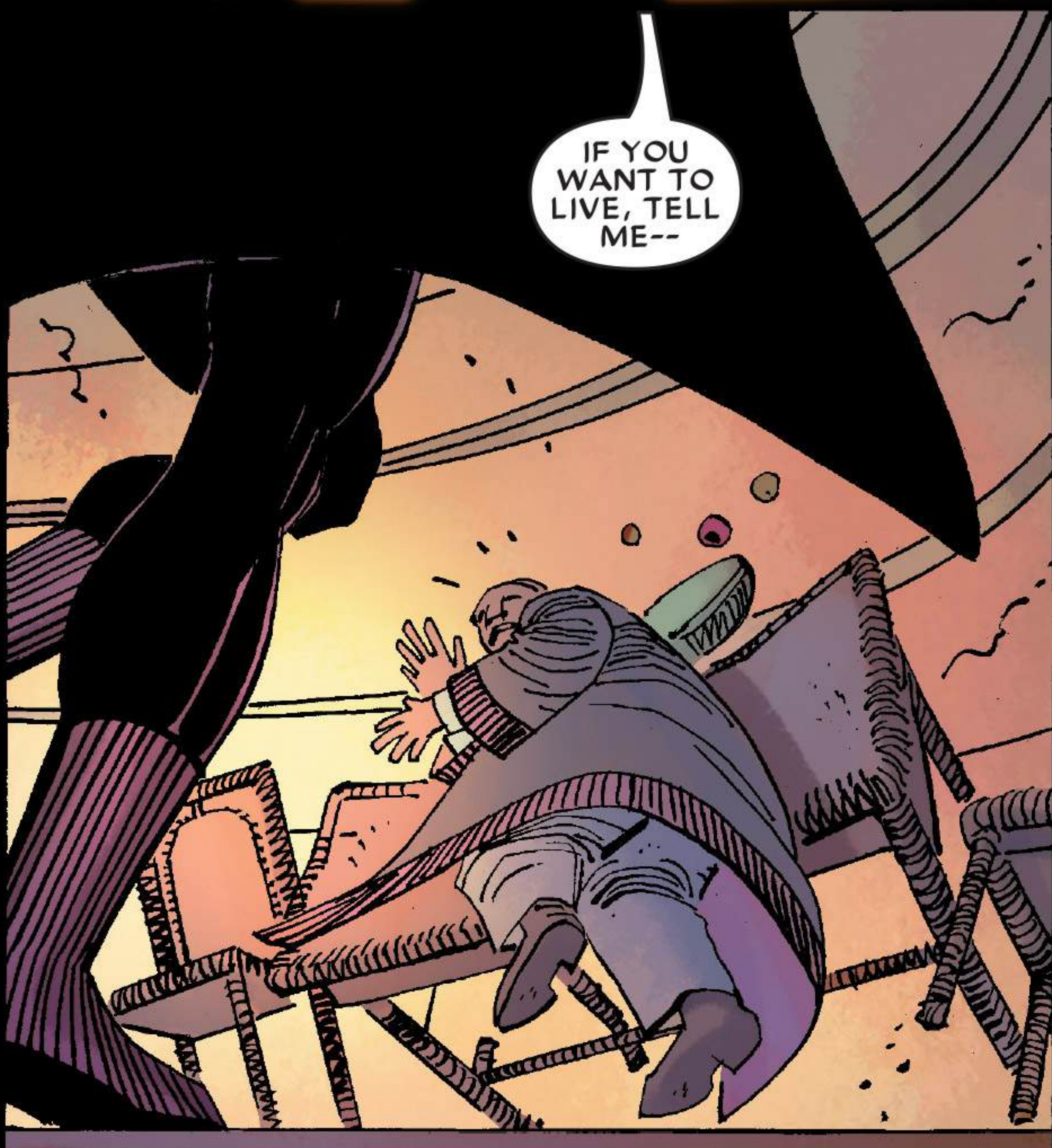
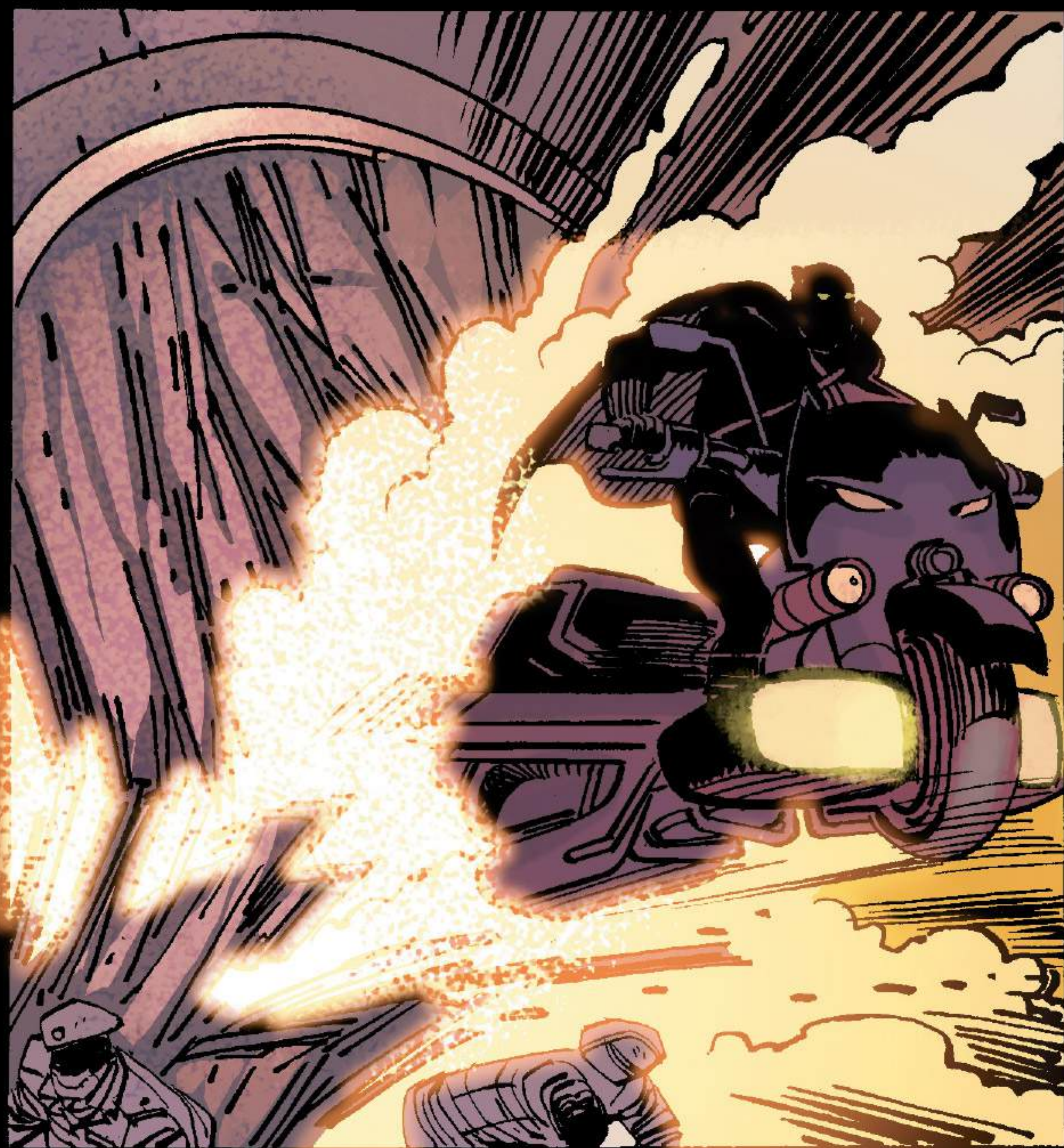
SIR, I SEE YOU'VE
FLOWN PAST THE
GREAT MOUND INTO
NIGANDA.

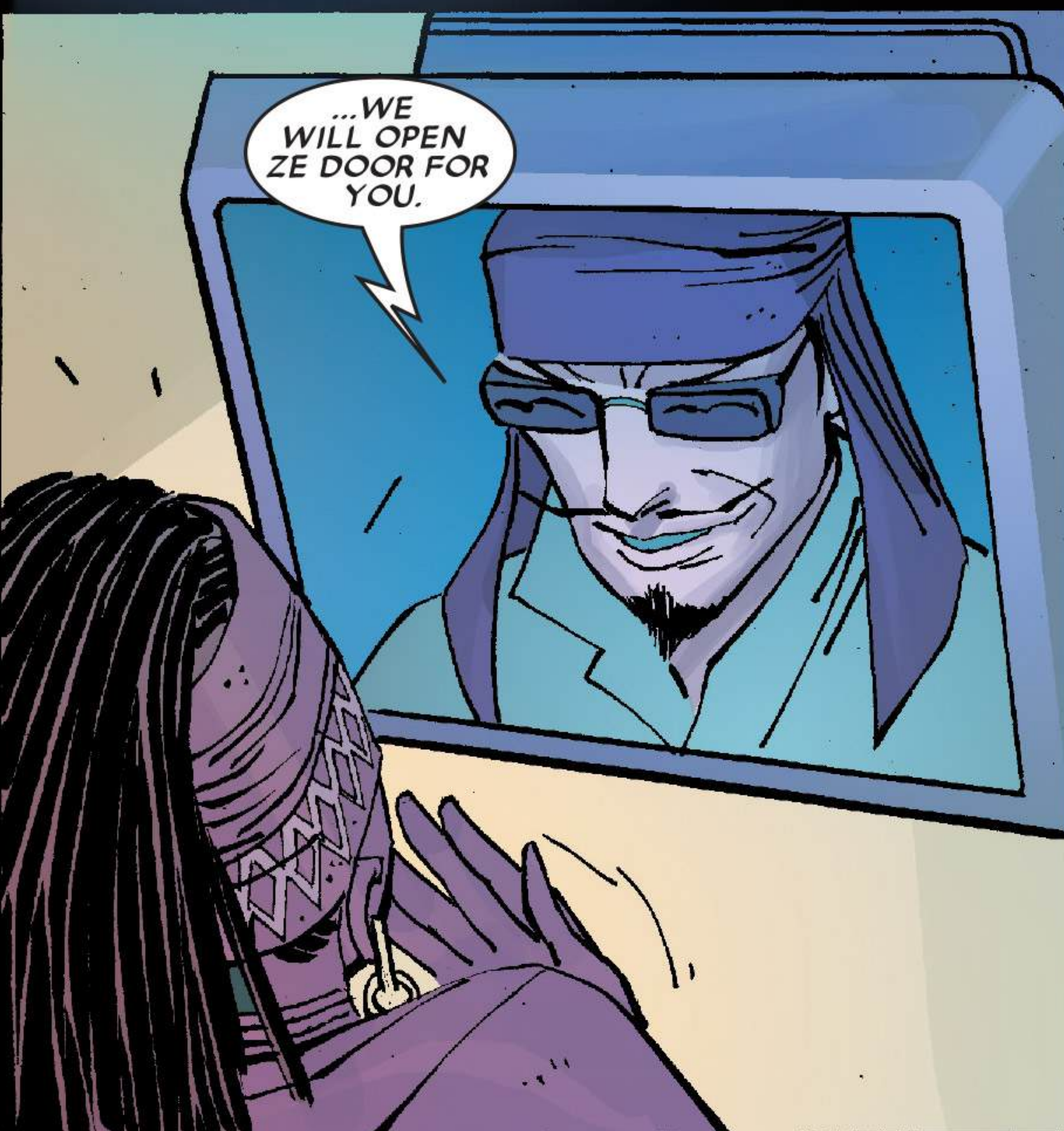
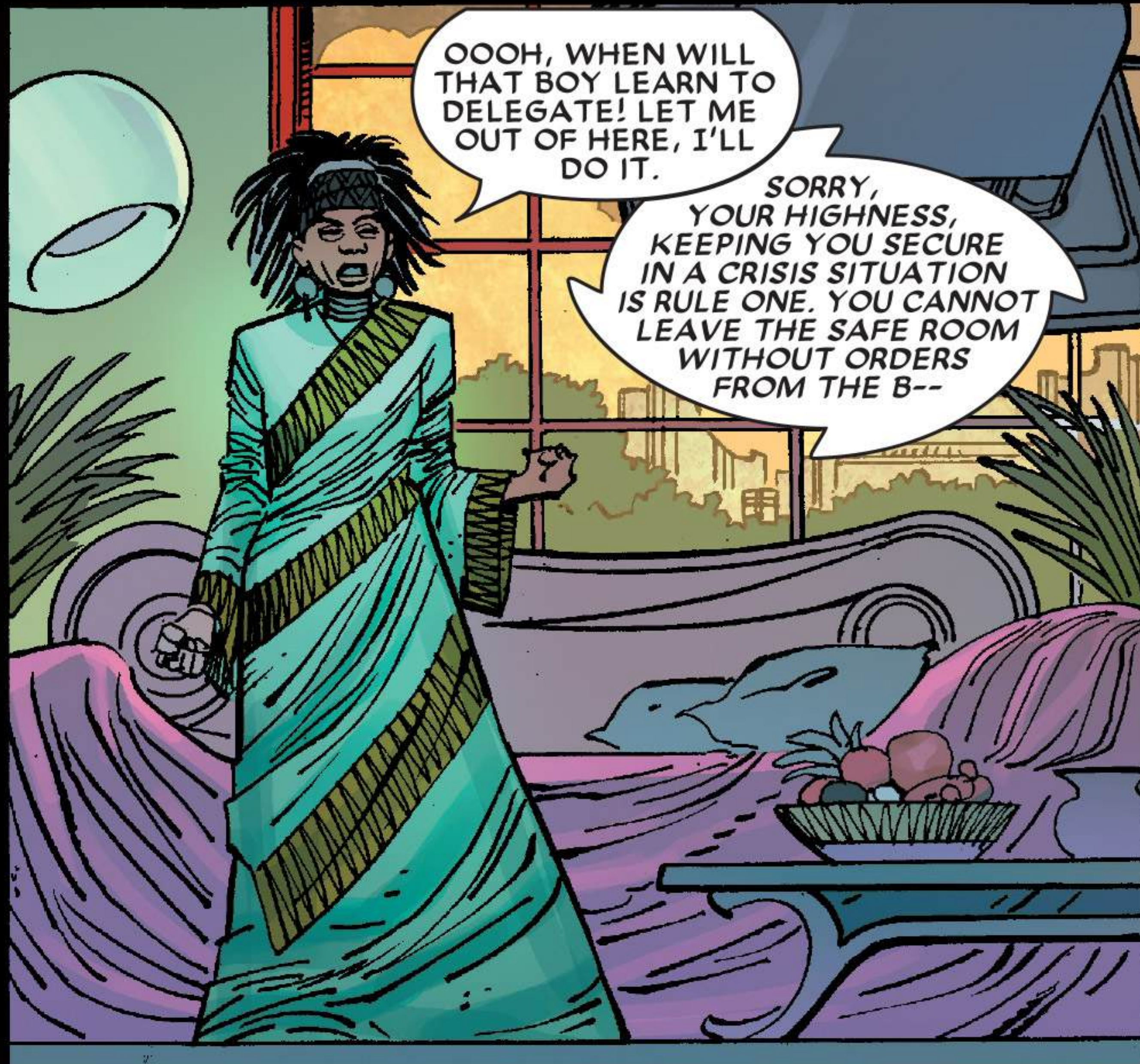
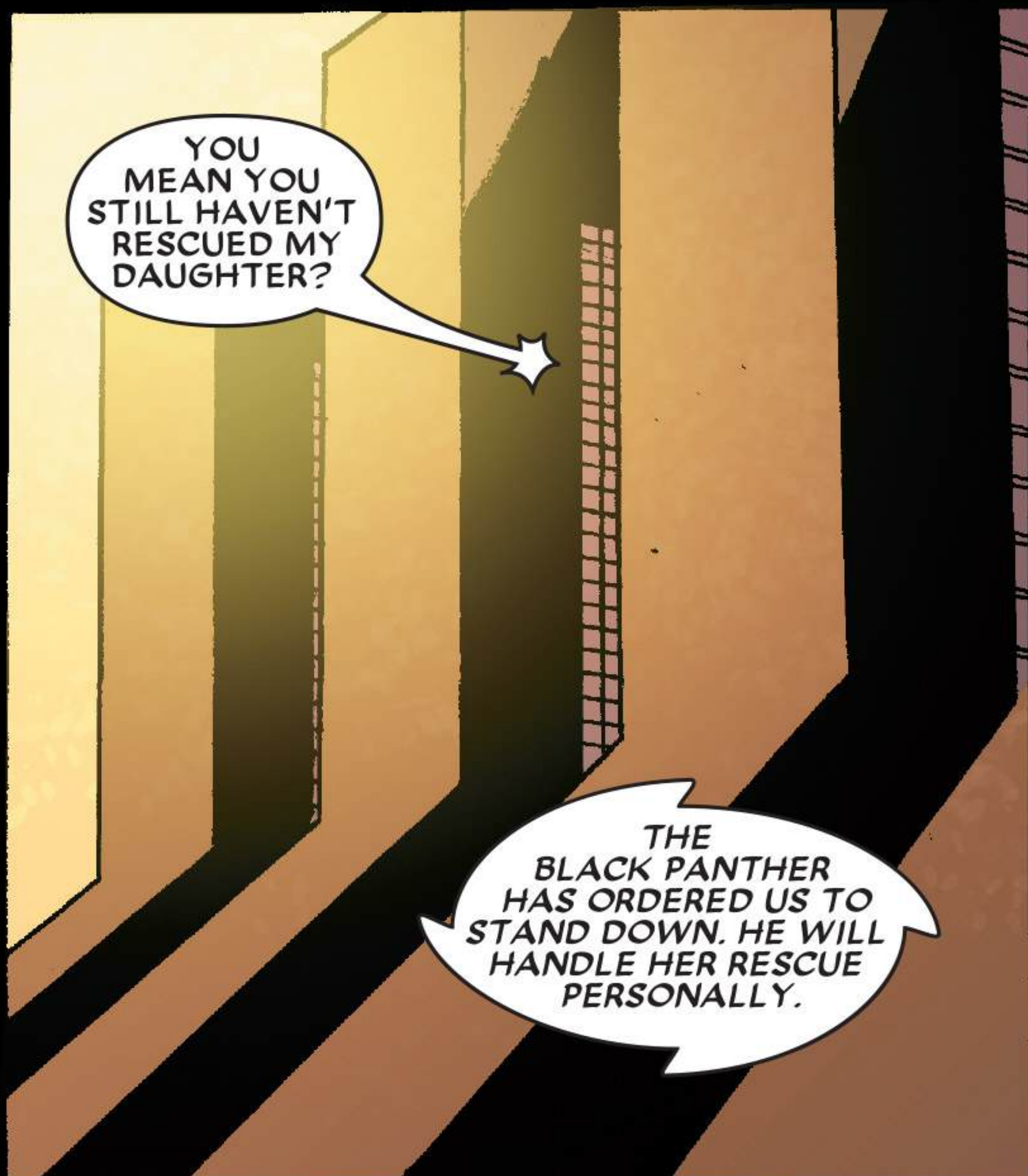
IT'S TIME
TO TAKE THE
FIGHT TO THEM.
AFTER I KILL
M'BUTU AND KLAU,
HAVE MY ARMOR
READY.

BUT--

DON'T
BOTHER. JUST
HOPE HE GETS
BACK IN
TIME.









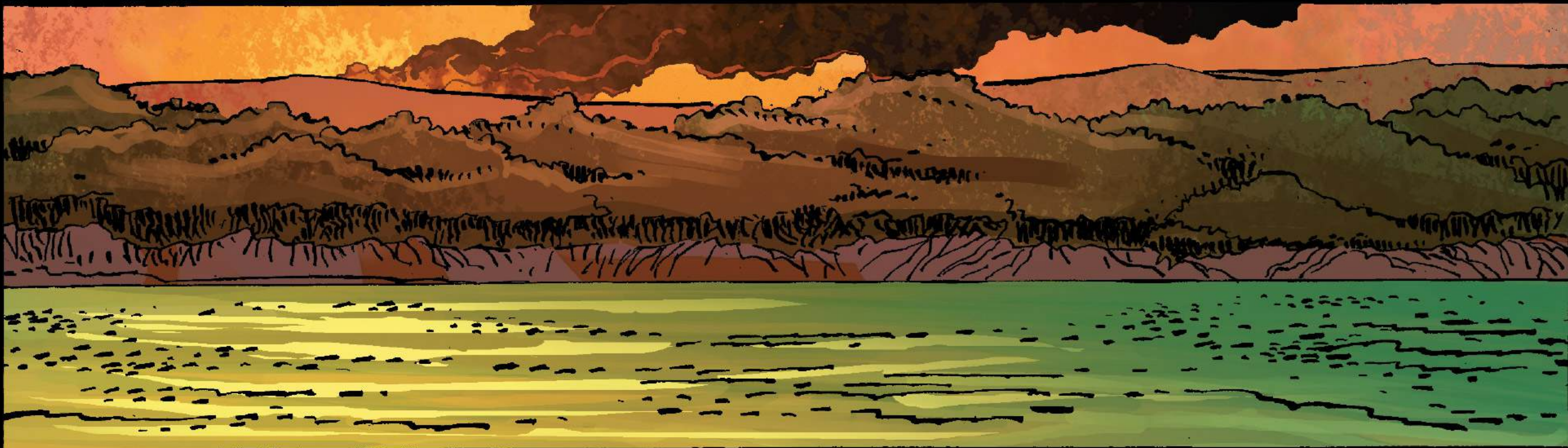
OF COURSE,
JUST BECAUSE
THE DOOR IS OPEN
DOESN'T MEAN
YOU'RE FREE TO
GO YET.



WE
NEED YOU
ALIVE JUST A
LITTLE WHILE
LONGER.

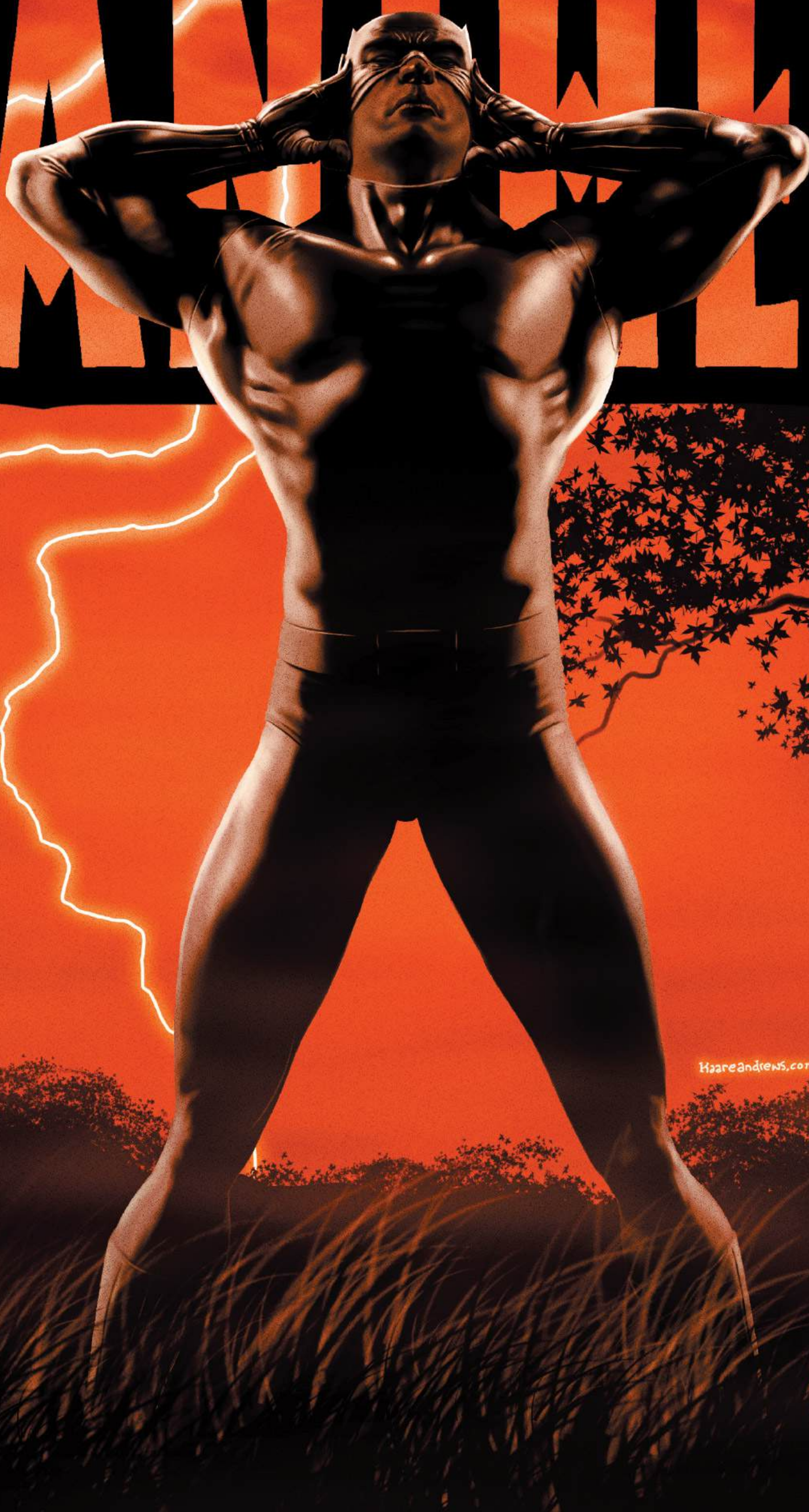


LONG
TIME NO
SEE, YOUR
HIGHNESS.



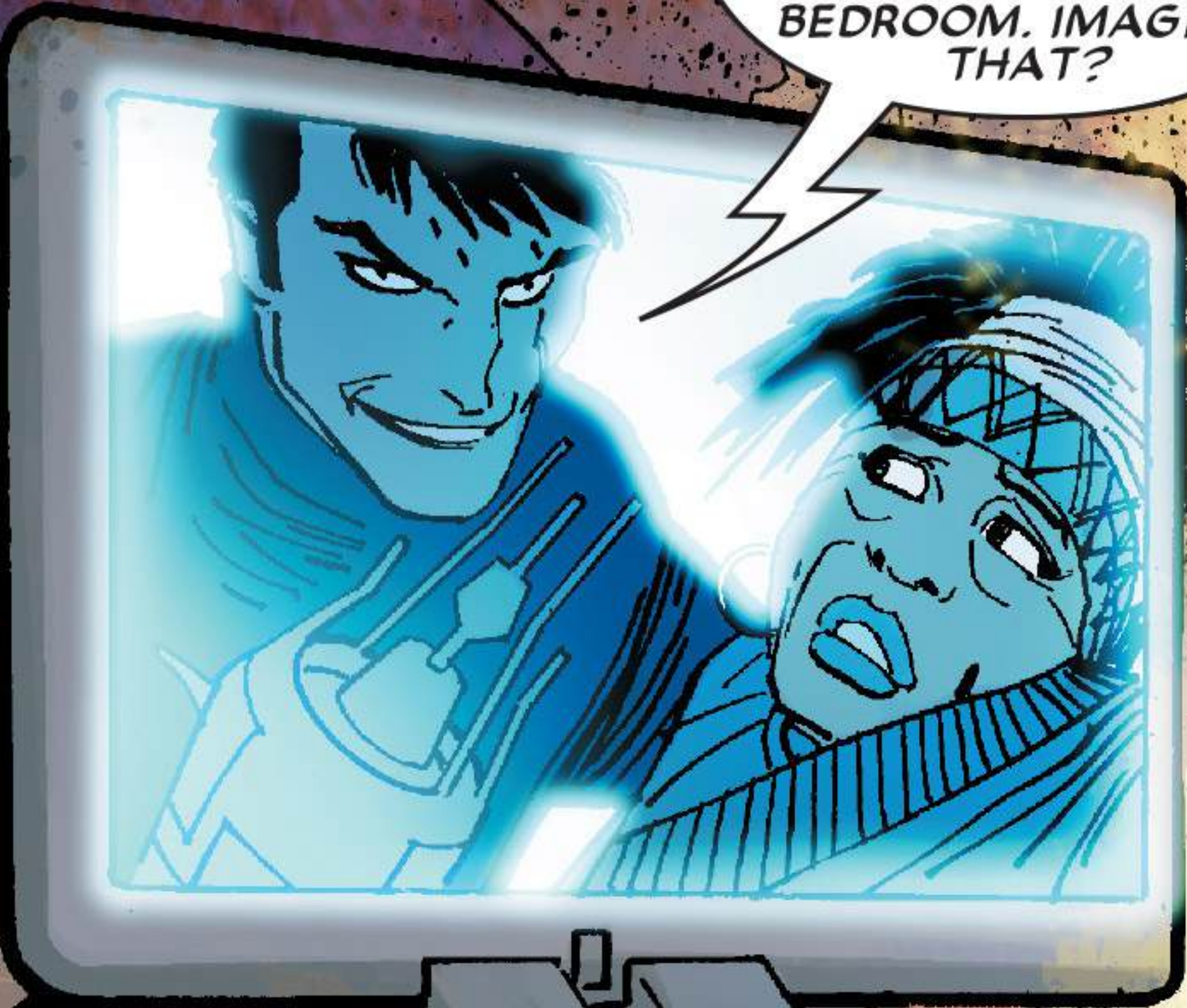
6

BLACK PANTHER



Haareandrews.com

WHY, T'CHALLA, WE MUST HAVE PASSED EACH OTHER ON THE WAY. THERE YOU ARE IN NIGANDA'S PRESIDENTIAL PALACE AND HERE I AM IN YOUR MOTHER'S BEDROOM. IMAGINE THAT?



WHO IS THE BLACK PANTHER?

PART SIX

W'KABI... ARE YOU AWARE OF THE SECURITY BREACH IN THE QUEEN'S CHAMBERS?

YOUR UNCLE IS LEADING A TEAM THERE RIGHT NOW.

NO! HE'S TOO OLD FOR THAT!

IS THAT M'BUTU? YOU'VE BEATEN HIM SO BAD I CAN HARDLY RECOGNIZE HIM!

HE'S STILL ALIVE...WHICH IS BETTER THAN WHAT'S COMING TO YOU.

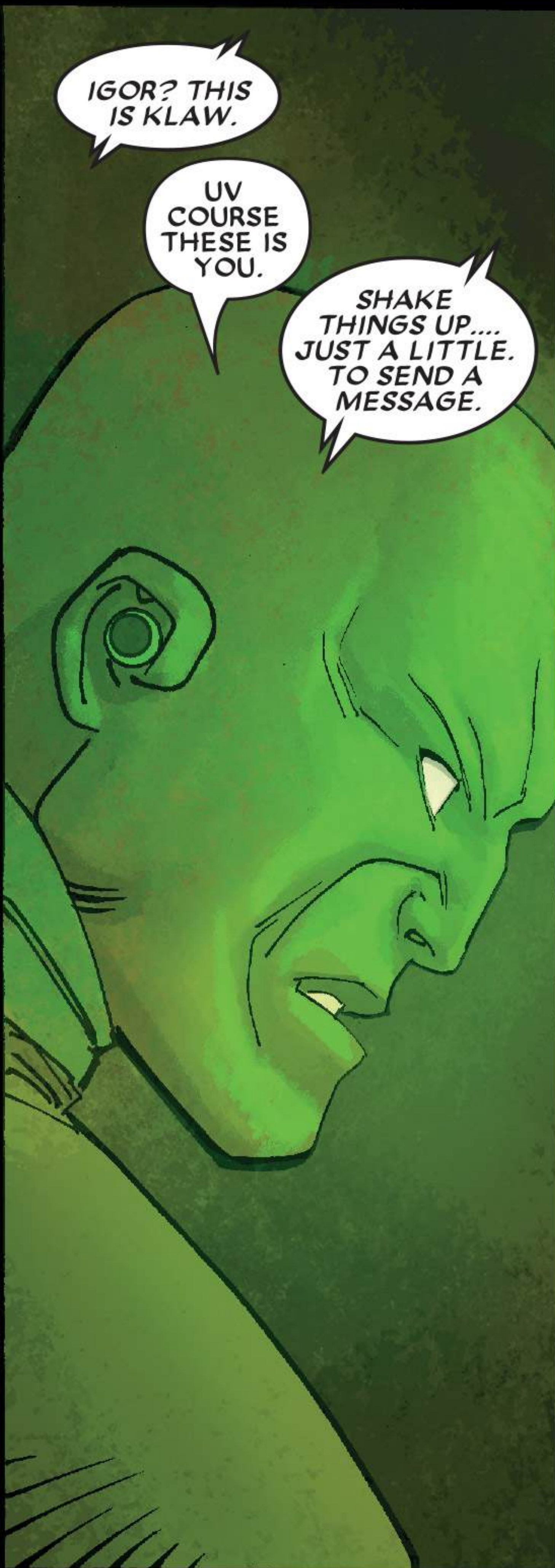


YOU HAVE NO LEVERAGE HERE, T'CHALLA. I HAVE YOUR MOTHER, AND I HAVE YOUR KINGDOM. NO MORE TOUGH TALK OR YOU'LL BE AN ORPHAN, GOT IT?



I'VE LIVED PLENTY, SON! I'LL DIE FIGHTING. YOU JUST DO WHAT YOU NEED TO DO TO SAVE WAKANDA!

IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE. I'VE GOT MORE THAN YOUR MOTHER HOSTAGE. LET ME SHOW YOU.



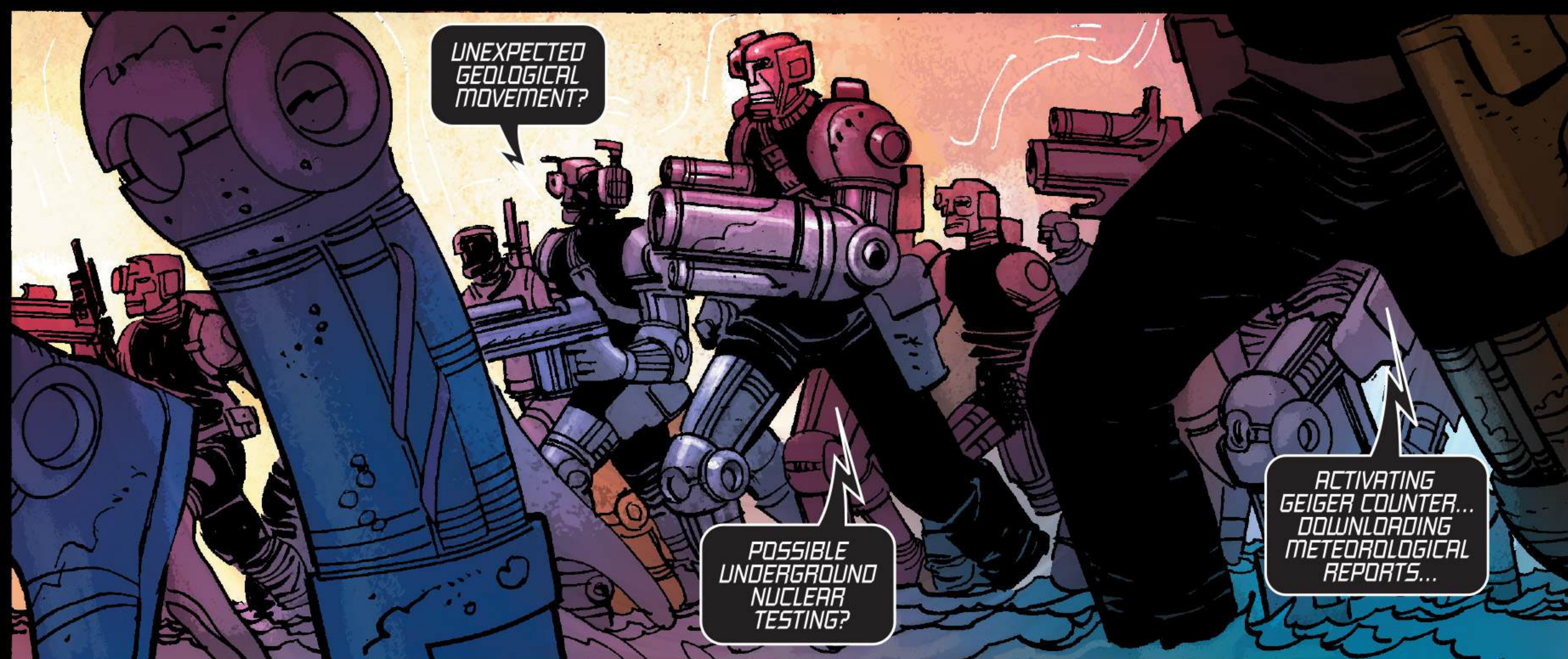
IGOR? THIS IS KLAU.

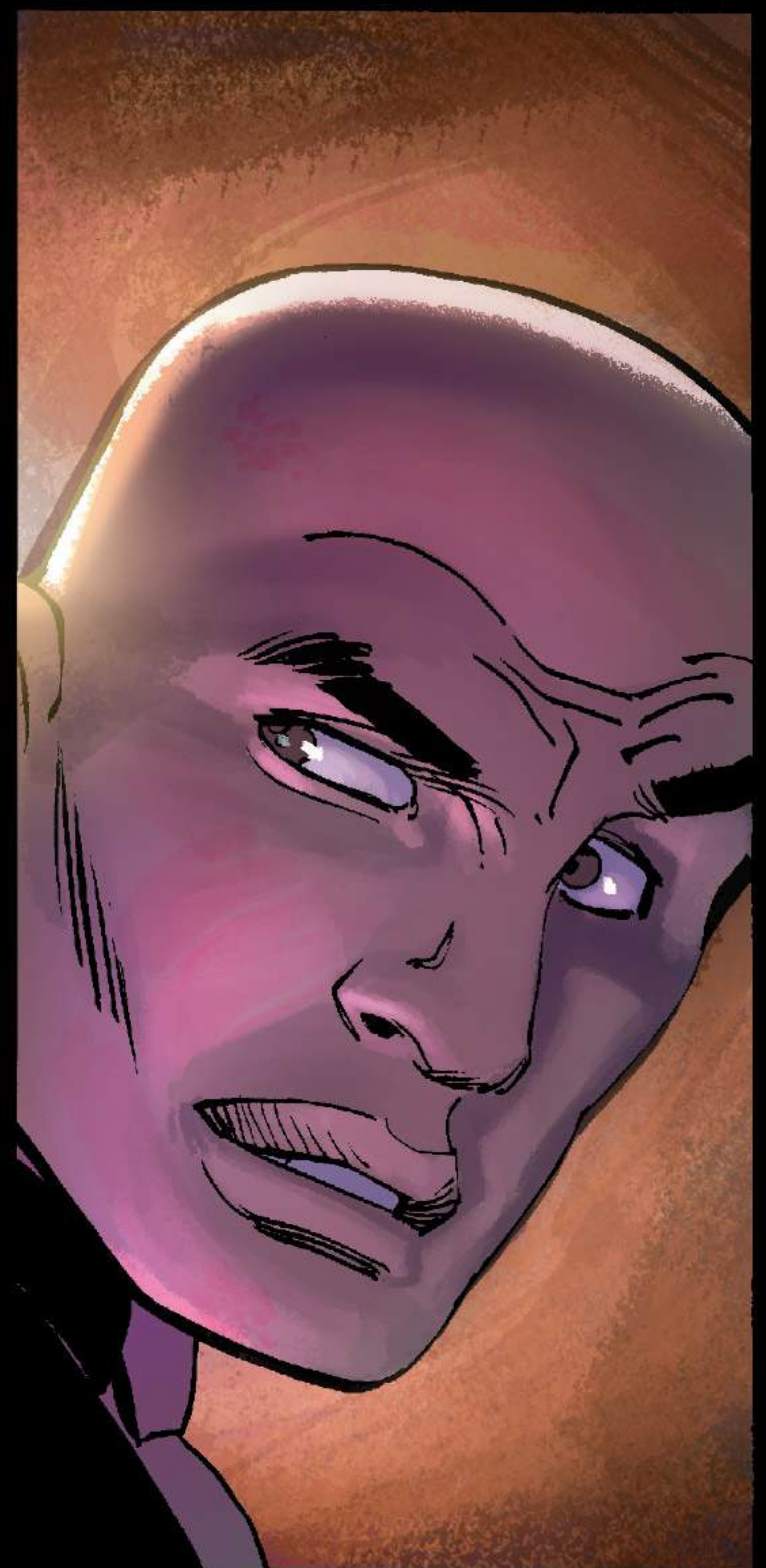
UV COURSE THESE IS YOU.

SHAKE THINGS UP... JUST A LITTLE. TO SEND A MESSAGE.



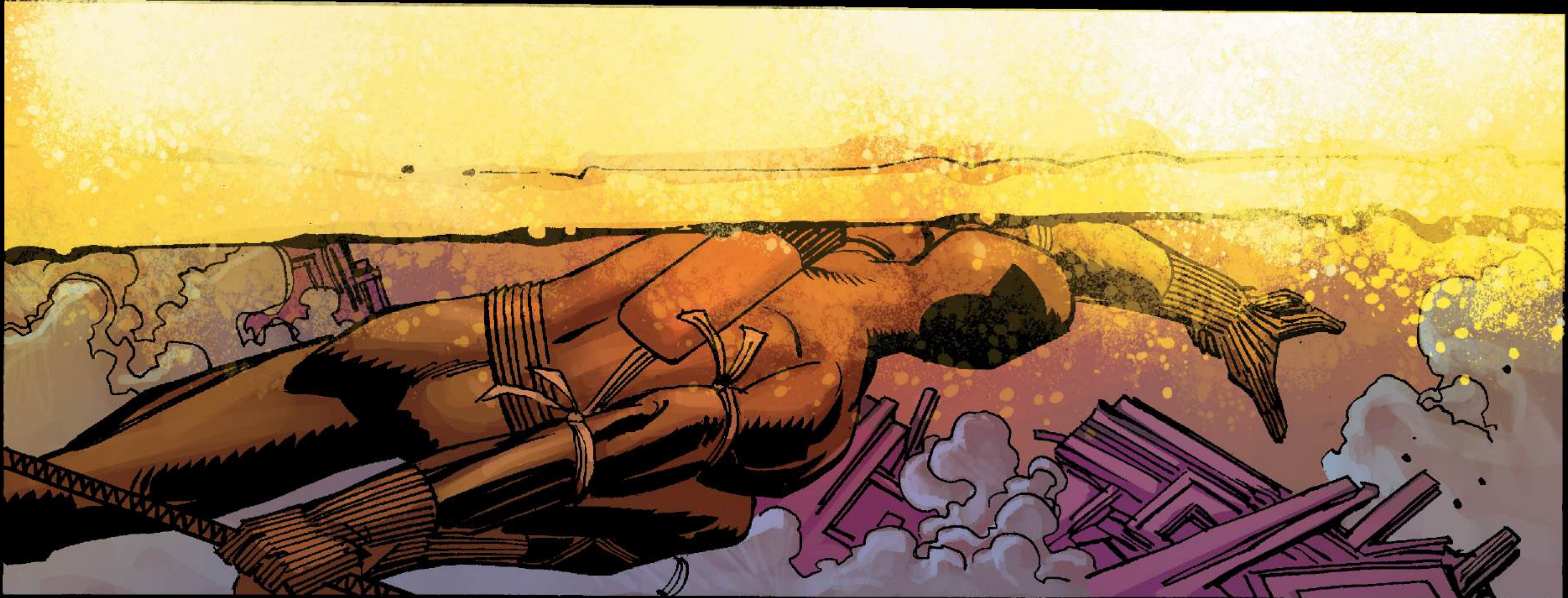
DA.











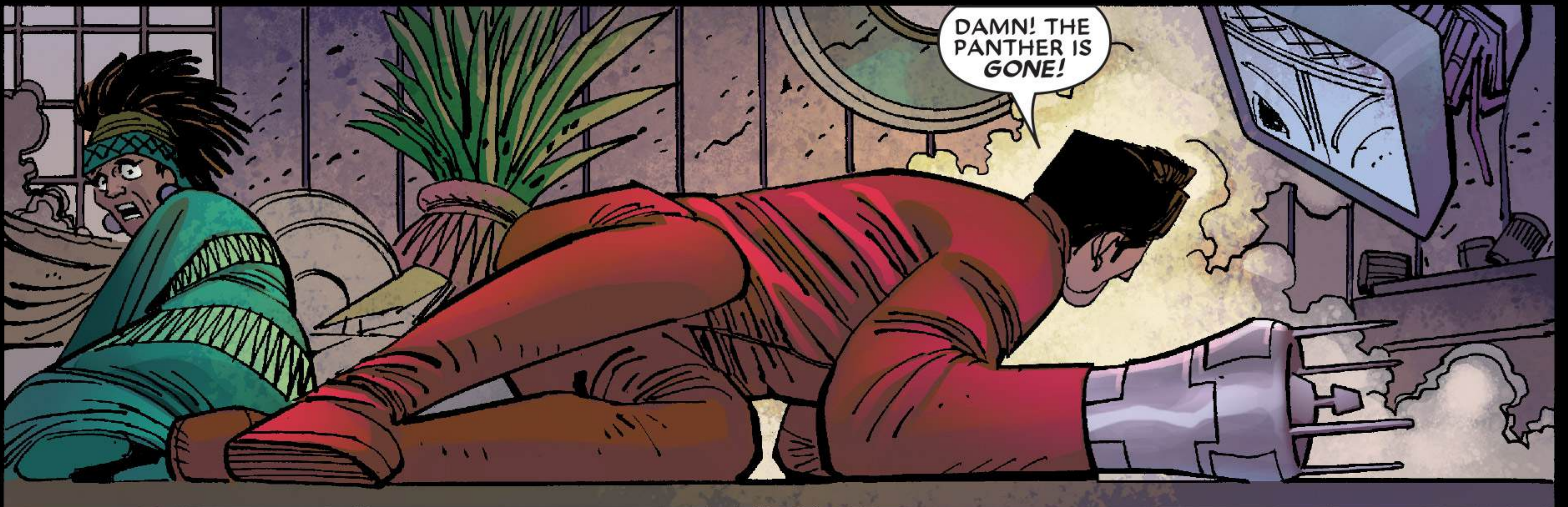


NO, KLAU!
NOW ZE LADIES
ARE BEATING
YOU UP?



I DON'T
SEE YOU
DOING SO
WELL!

BUT
THEEZE
WOMEN ARE
YOUNG! AND
THEY ARE
TWO OF
THEM!



DAMN! THE
PANTHER IS
GONE!



THERE ARE STILL
MORE PANTHERS
HERE THAN YOU
CAN HANDLE!

AHHHHH!

WHUMP



OH,
THAT'S
NOTHING!

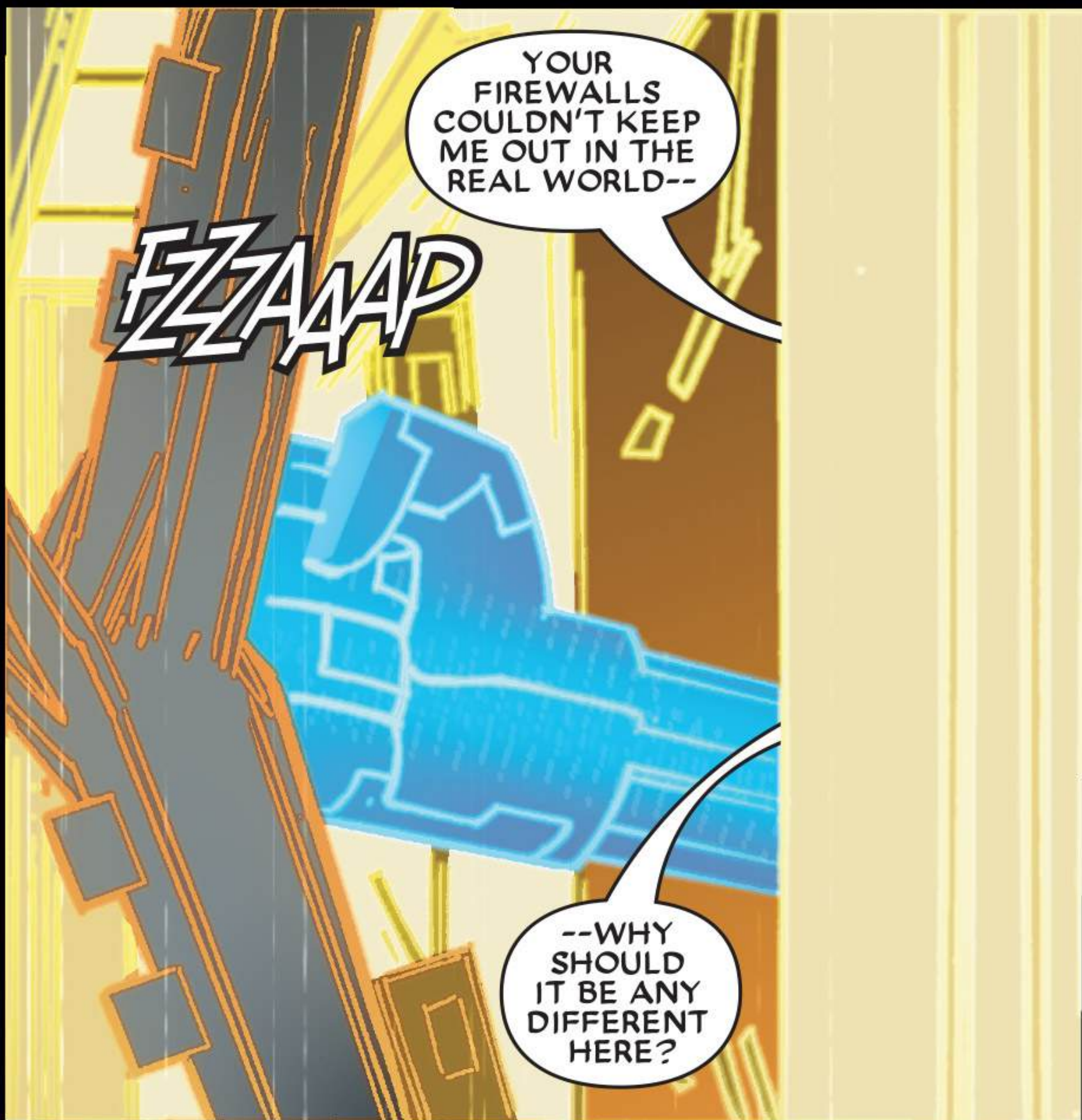
THIS IS
REALLY
GOING TO
HURT.







OKAY....
WHERE ARE
THE SECURITY
CAMERAS?



YOUR
FIREWALLS
COULDN'T KEEP
ME OUT IN THE
REAL WORLD--

--WHY
SHOULD
IT BE ANY
DIFFERENT
HERE?

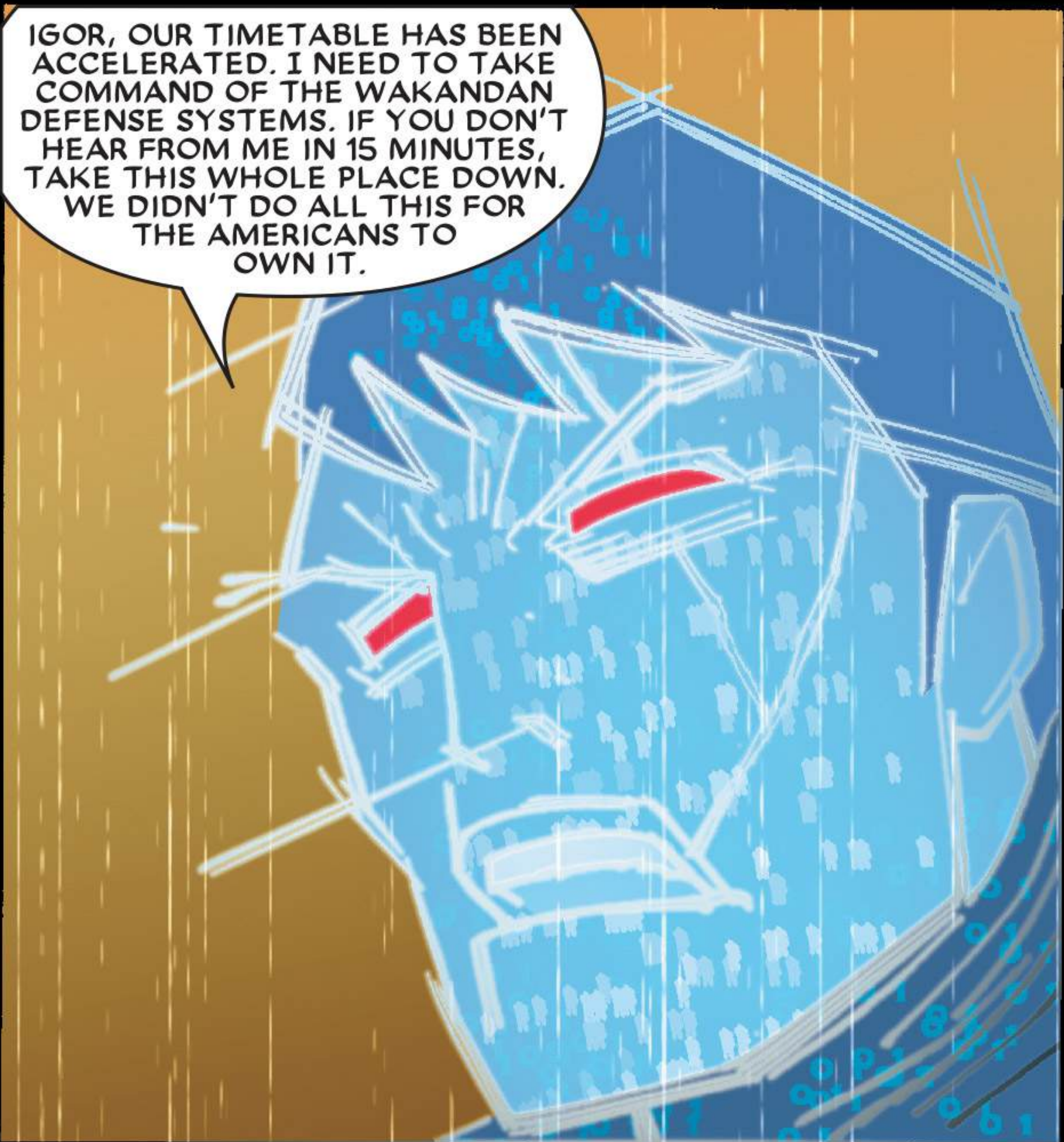


NOTHING
THERE... THAT'S
NOT IT...



WIND-UP
ZOMBIES.

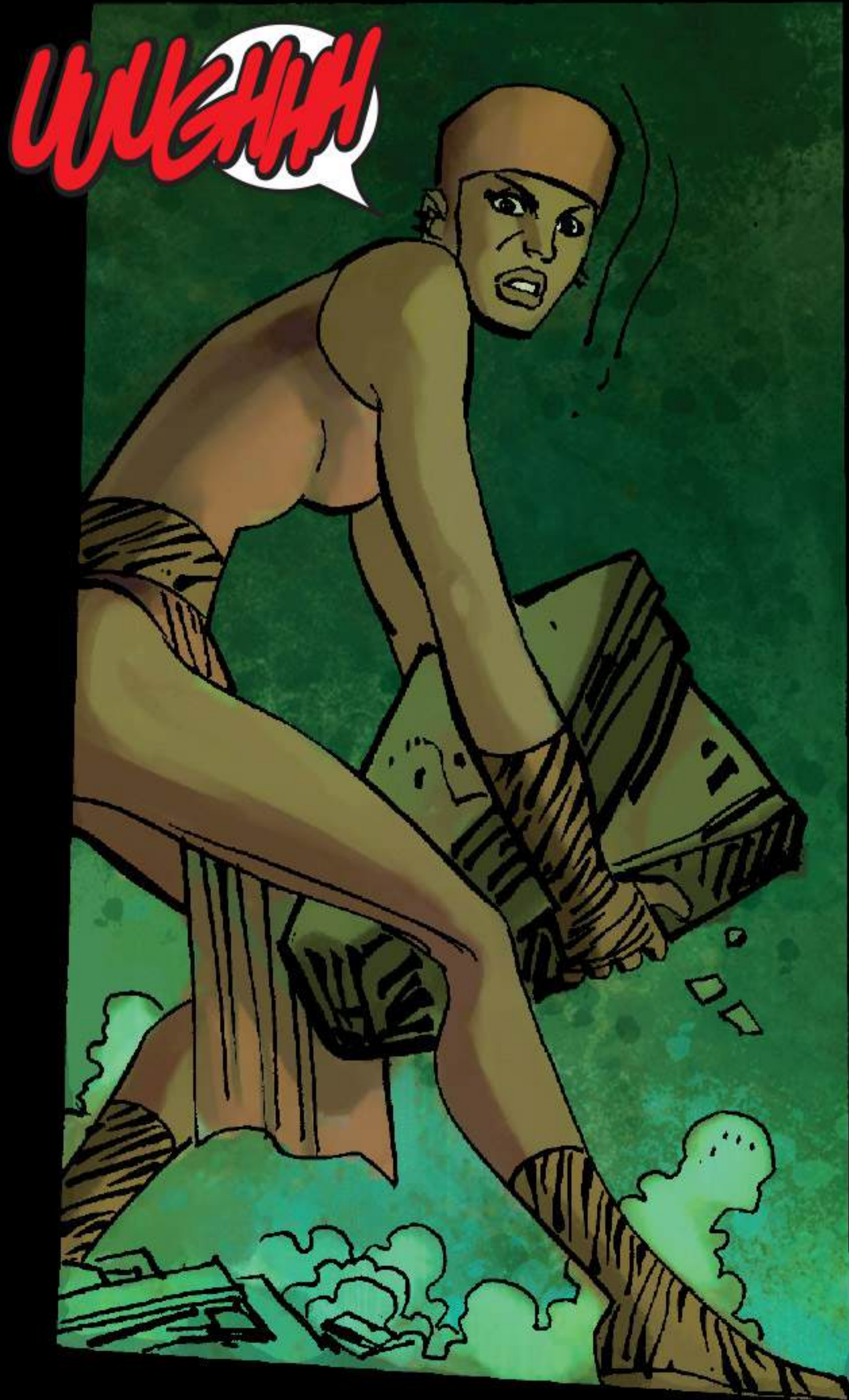
THE
AMERICANS
ARE MAKING
THEIR PLAY.



IGOR, OUR TIMETABLE HAS BEEN
ACCELERATED. I NEED TO TAKE
COMMAND OF THE WAKANDAN
DEFENSE SYSTEMS. IF YOU DON'T
HEAR FROM ME IN 15 MINUTES,
TAKE THIS WHOLE PLACE DOWN.
WE DIDN'T DO ALL THIS FOR
THE AMERICANS TO
OWN IT.



DA, IN FIFTEEN MINUTES
IT ALL GOES DOWN. JUST
BE READY TO DIG ME
OUT.





WHOSE ROBOTS ARE THESE?

CYBORGS, SIR. THEY APPEAR TO BE ABOUT 40 TO 70 PERCENT ORGANIC MATTER, SIR. REANIMATED CORPSES. U.S. ISSUE.

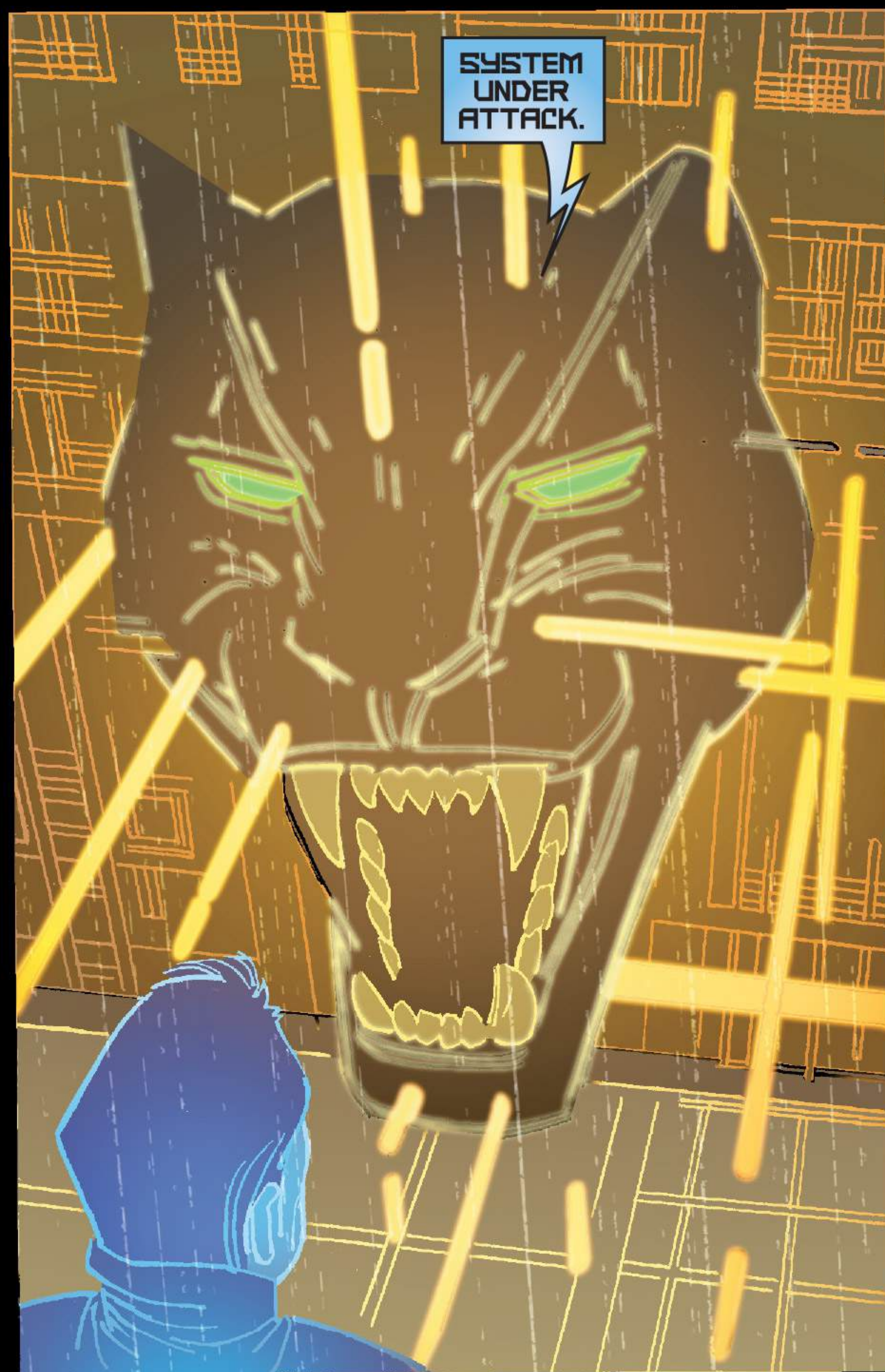
PERVERTED.

EXCUSE ME, SIR--OUR SECURITY SYSTEMS ARE UNDER CYBER-ASSAULT!



NEGHHHHHHH!

THIS ONE'S A LITTLE--

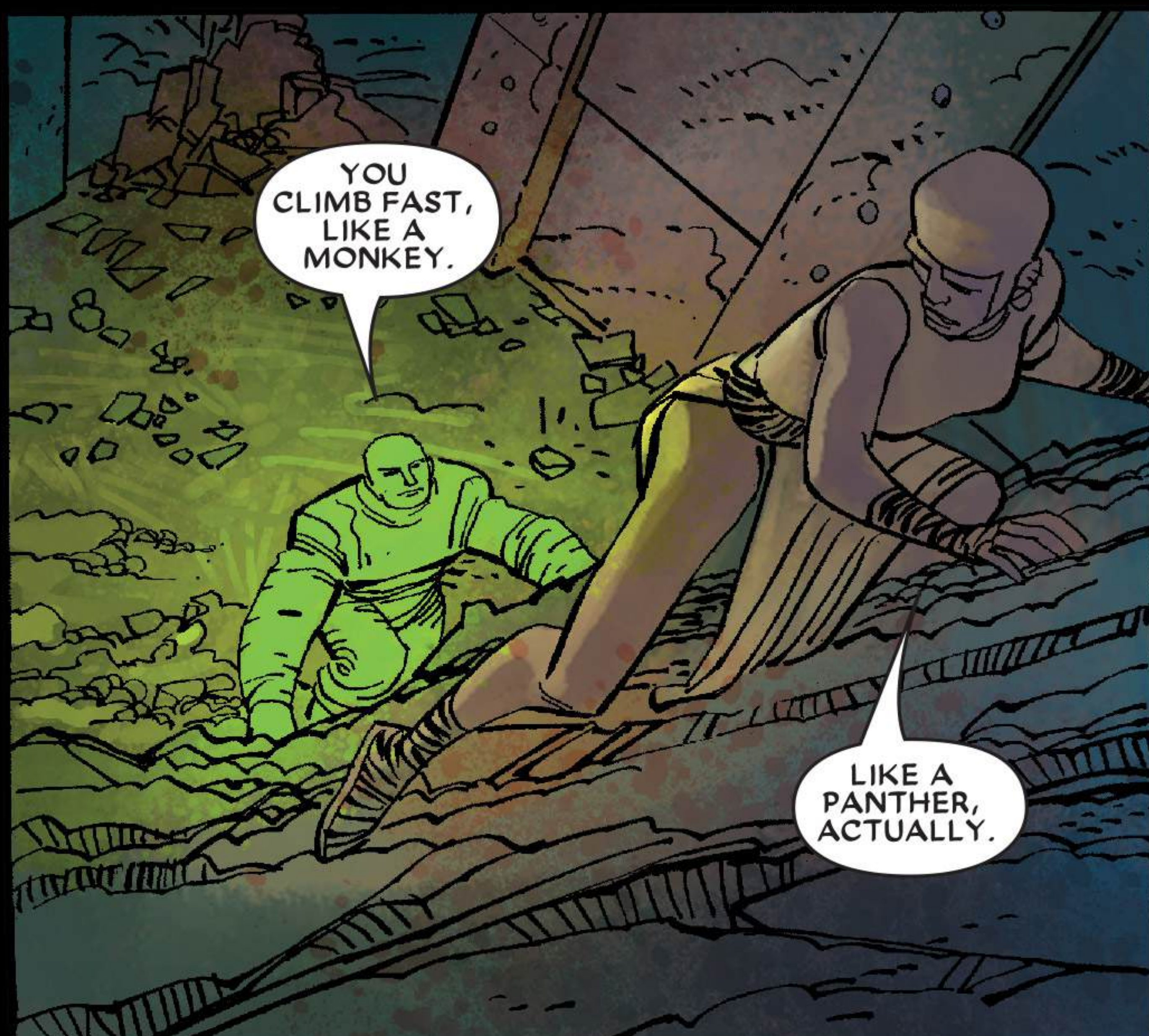


SYSTEM UNDER ATTACK.



ELIMINATE VIRUS.

IGOR? CAN YOU HEAR ME? I CAN'T HACK THEIR SYSTEM. JUST TAKE THE WHOLE THING DOWN!





IGOR! IGOR! STOP!
FOCUS ON THE JOB
AT HAND! YOU CAN
KILL HER ALONG
WITH EVERYONE
ELSE--



HEY, WHERE *IS*
EVERYBODY
ELSE?

ZEY ESCAPED
WHILE YOU WERE
LOST IN ZE
CYBERWORLD.

WHY
DIDN'T
THEY "KEEL"
YOU?

I
BEGGED.



REGENT S'YAN
IS STILL IN
SHOCK.

WE NEED
A TRANSPORT
TO GET HIM TO
A HOSPITAL.

QUEEN MOTHER,
I CAN CARRY
THAT--

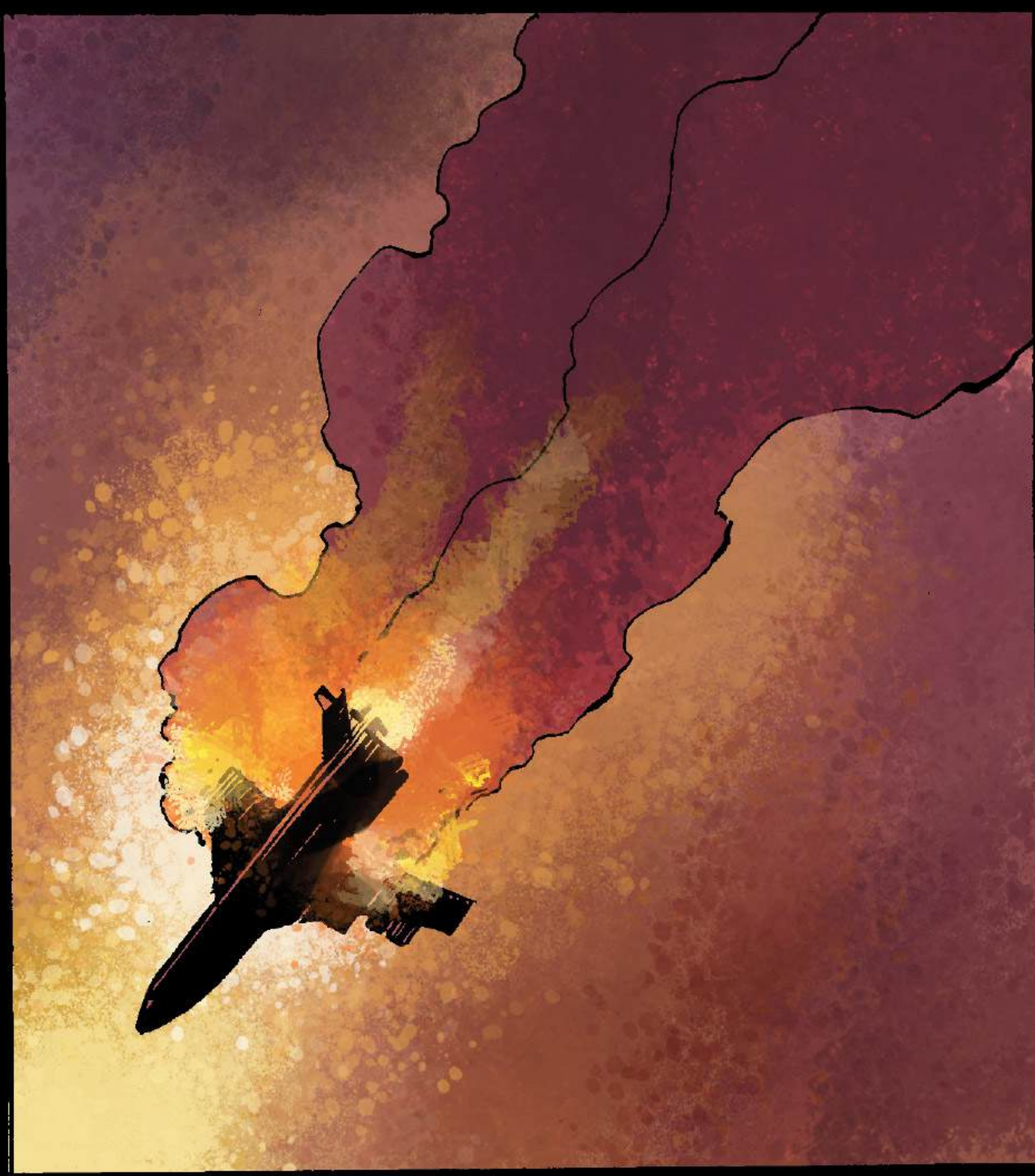
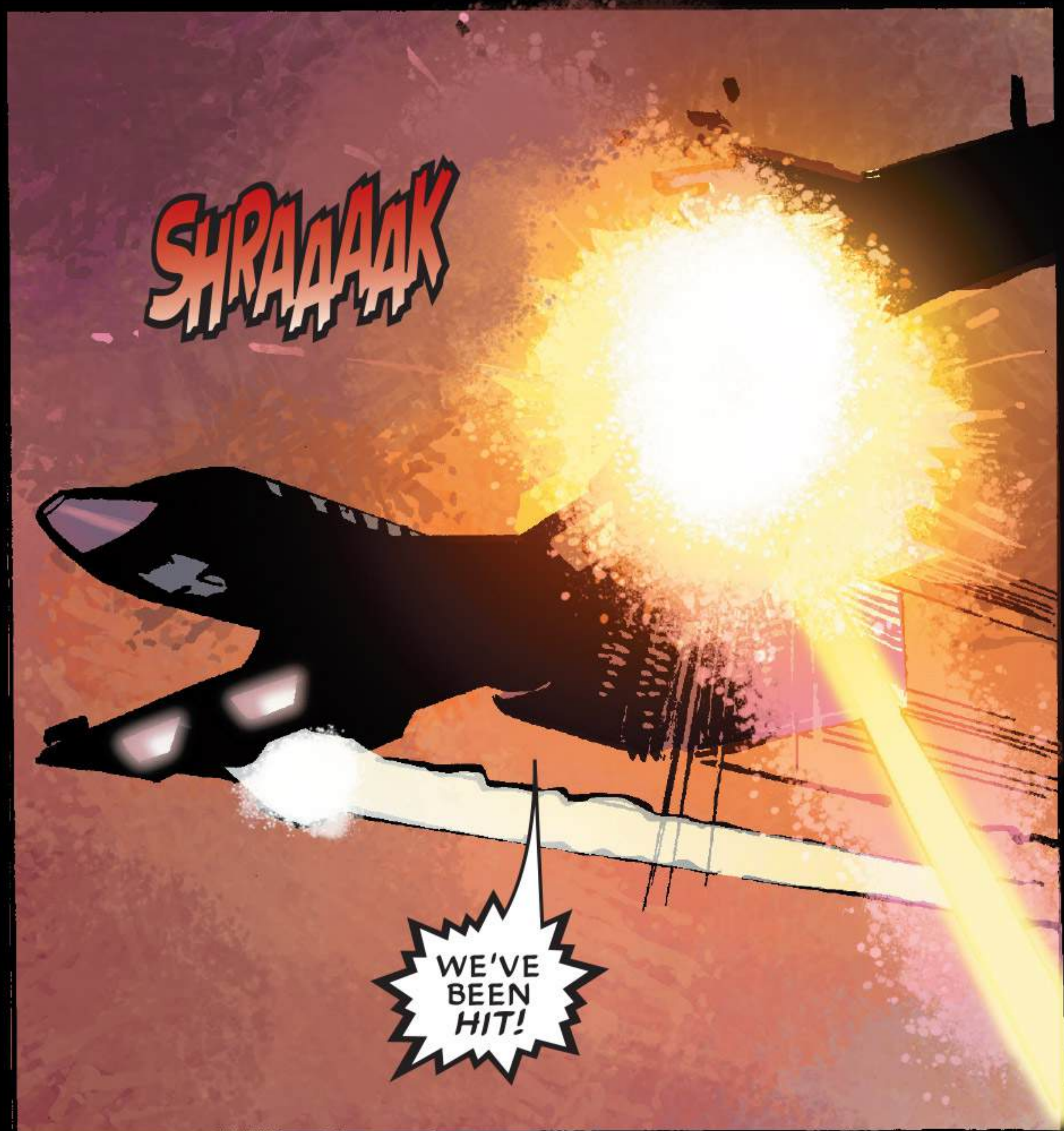
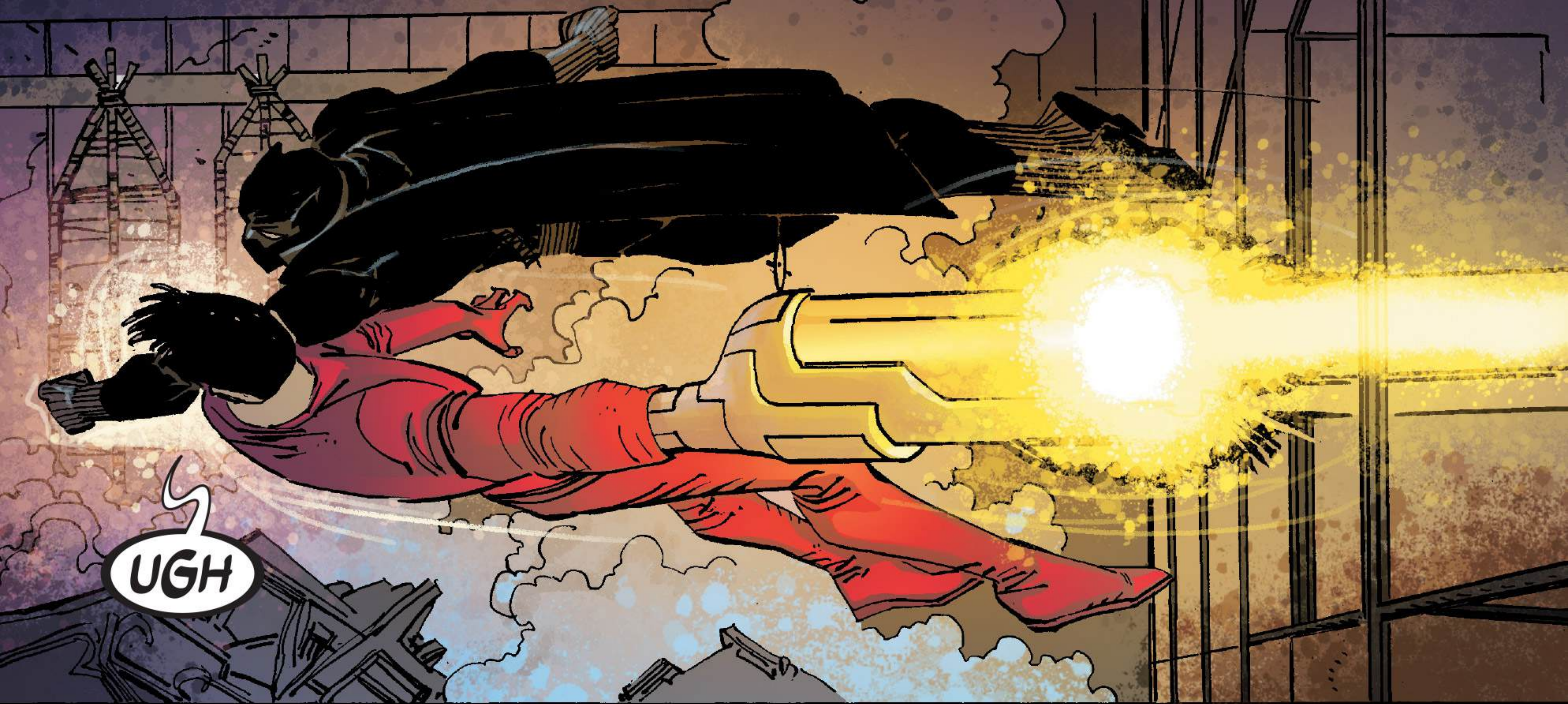
--I'VE
CARRIED BLOODY
LIMBS BEFORE! LET'S
GO BEFORE THE
SOLDIERS SEE
US!

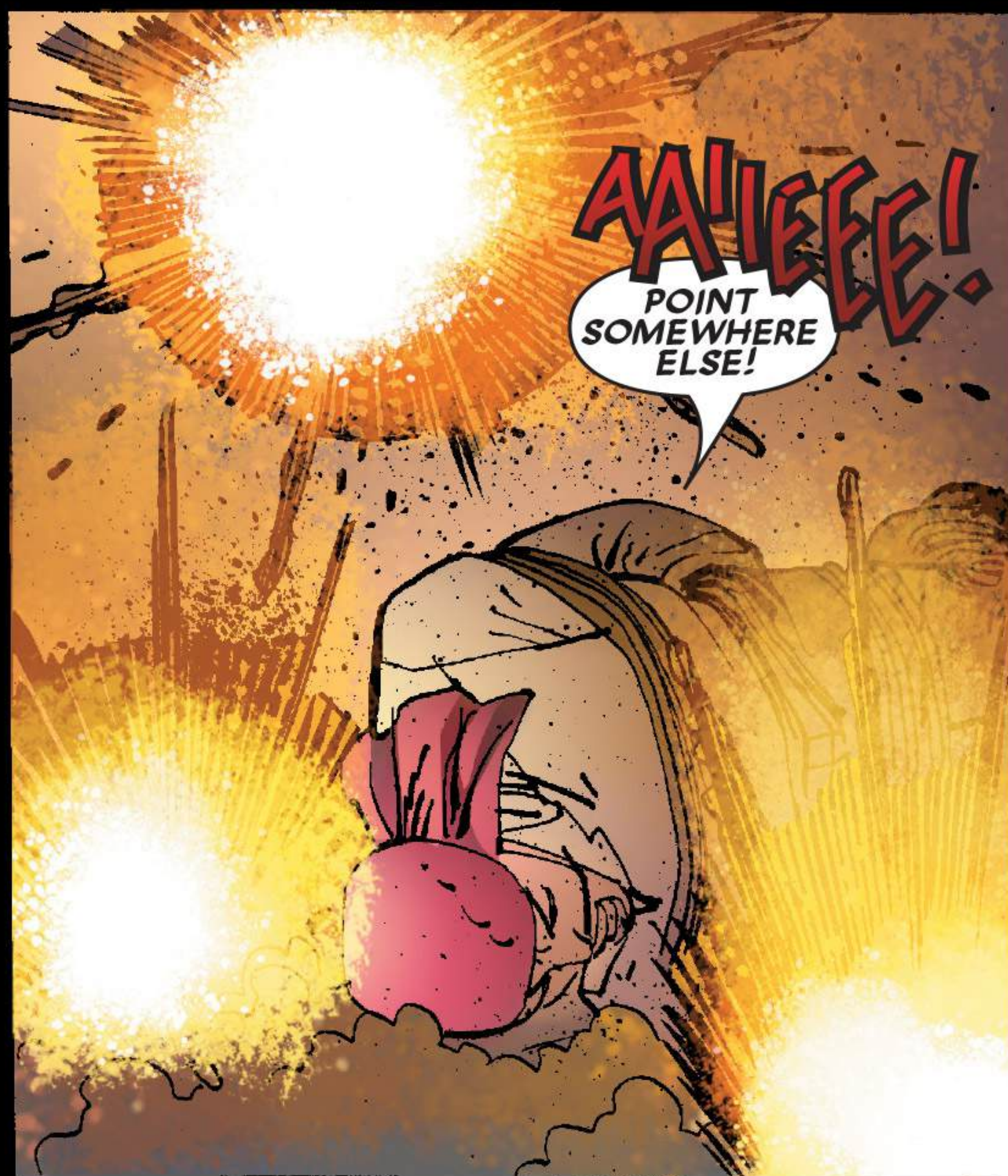


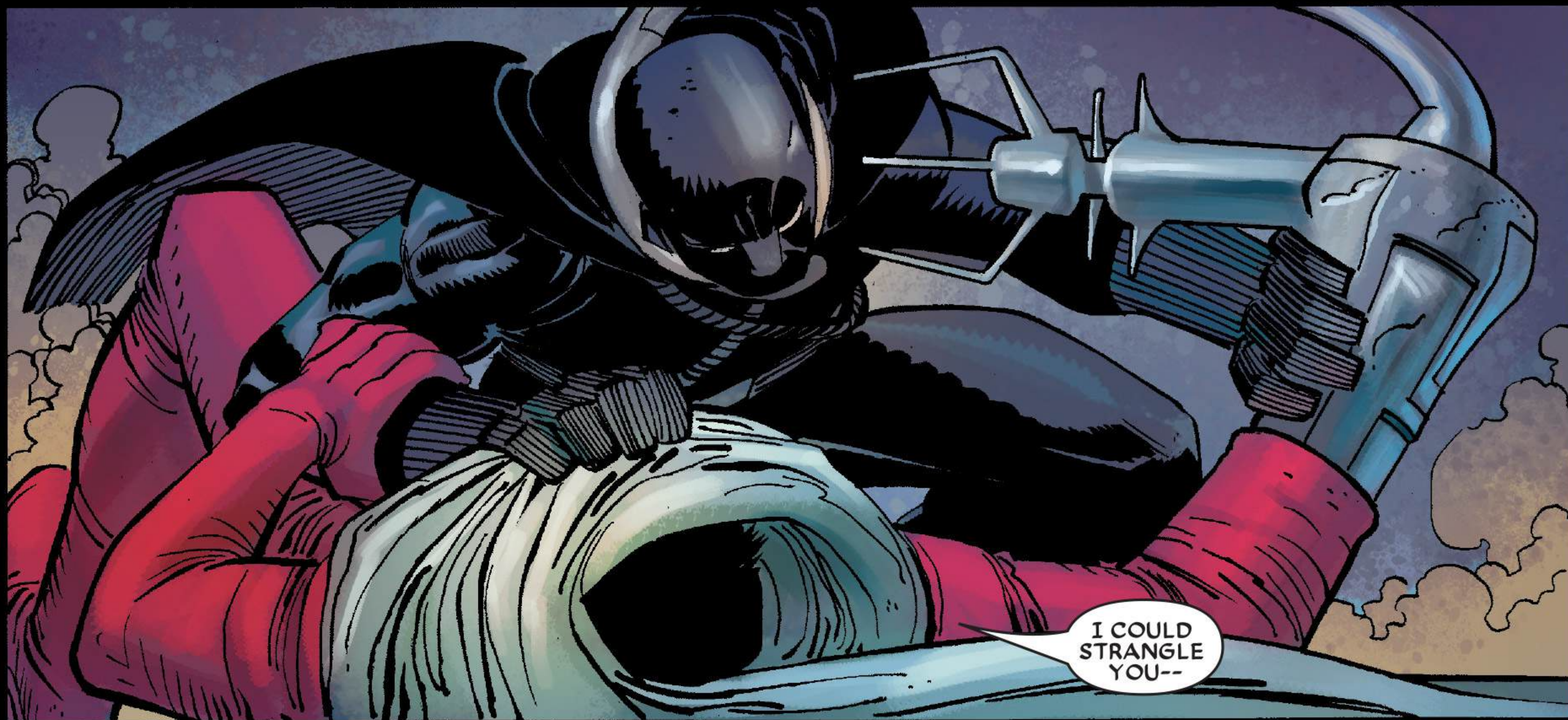
AH,
THERE YOU
ARE!



GOOD,
STAY TIGHTLY
BUNCHED. I CAN
KILL YOU ALL IN
ONE SHOT.









IGOR!
WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING?

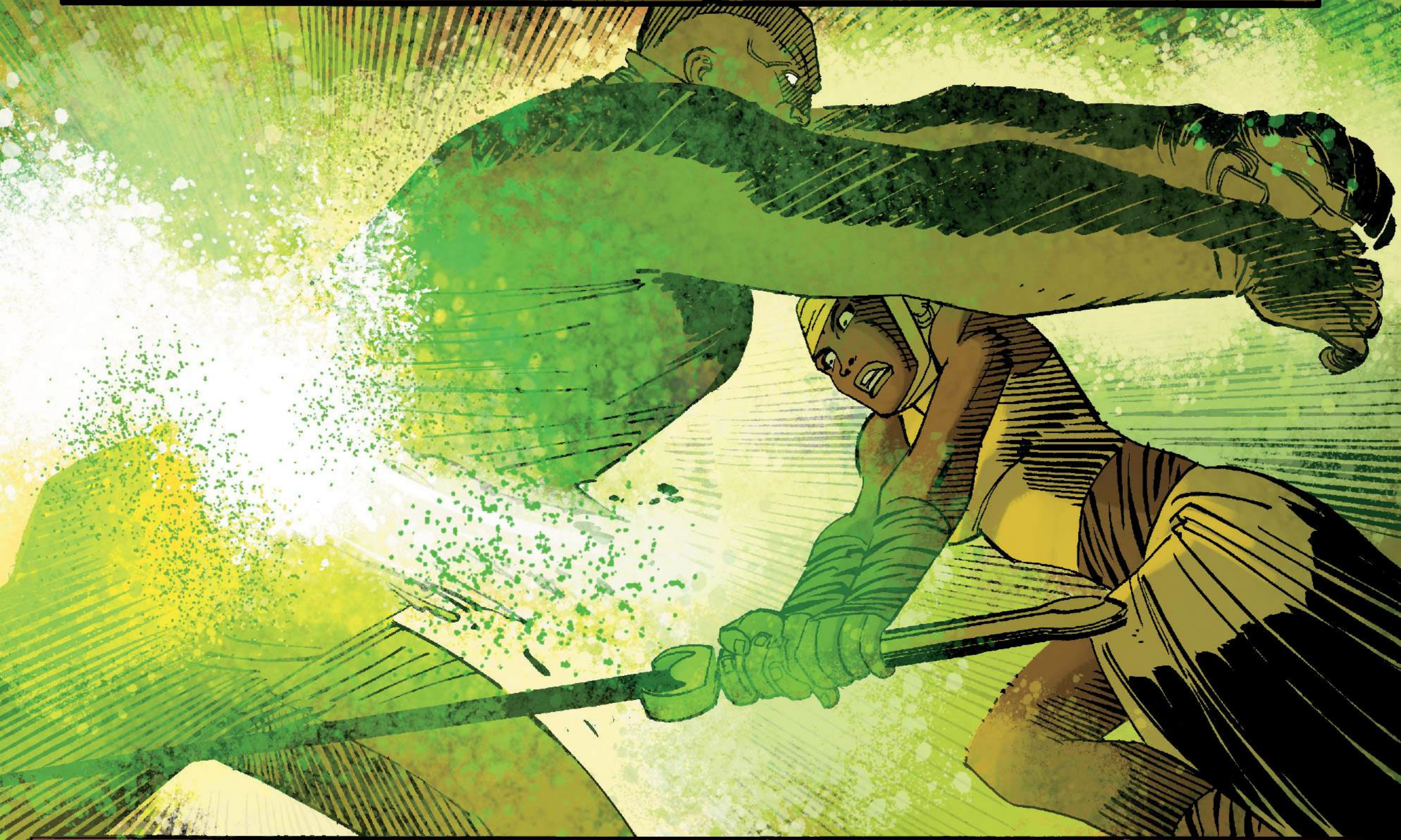
DA, I
HEAR YOU!
JUST GIVE
ME VUN
SECOND!



LITTLE GIRL, WHY
DO YOU THINK
THAT NAIL FILE
WILL HURT
ME?



BECAUSE
MOST BLADES
CAN'T CUT
THROUGH
SOLID ROCK.

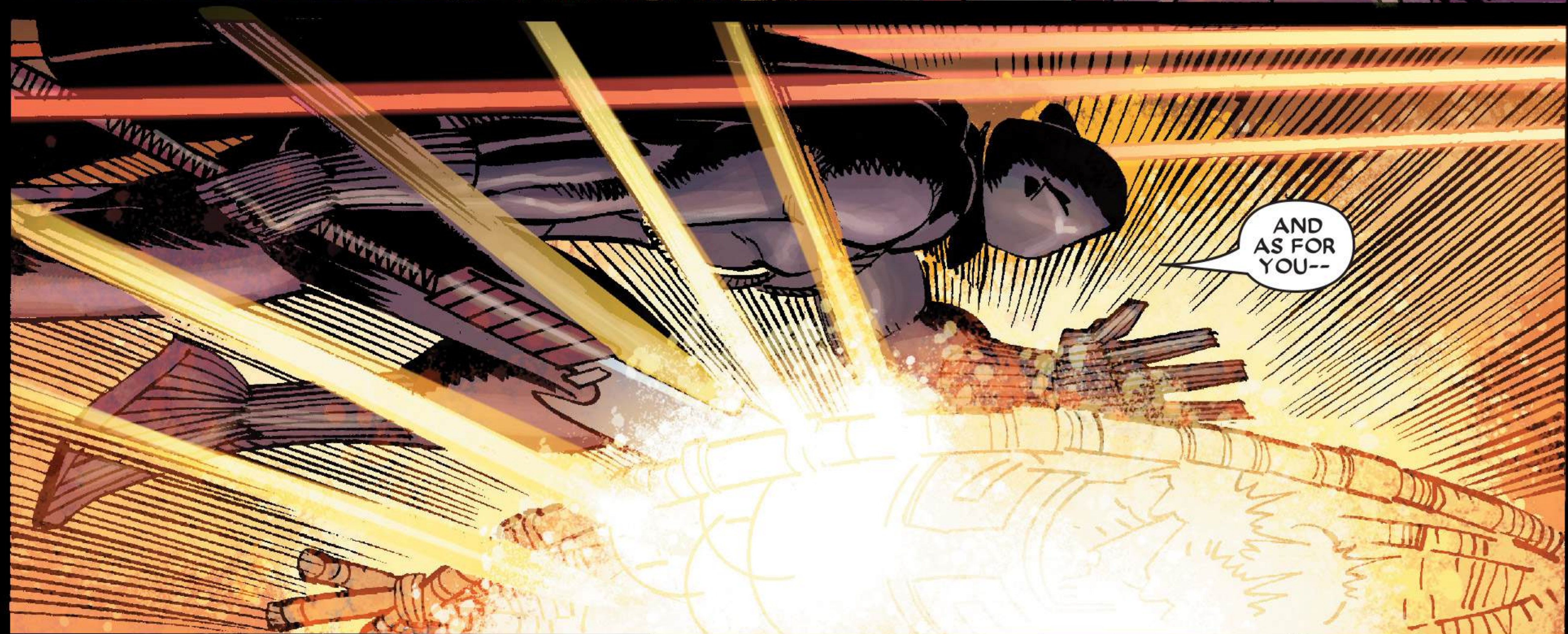


IGOR...
IGOR!



YOU THINK A **STRAW SHIELD** WILL STOP A LASER BEAM?

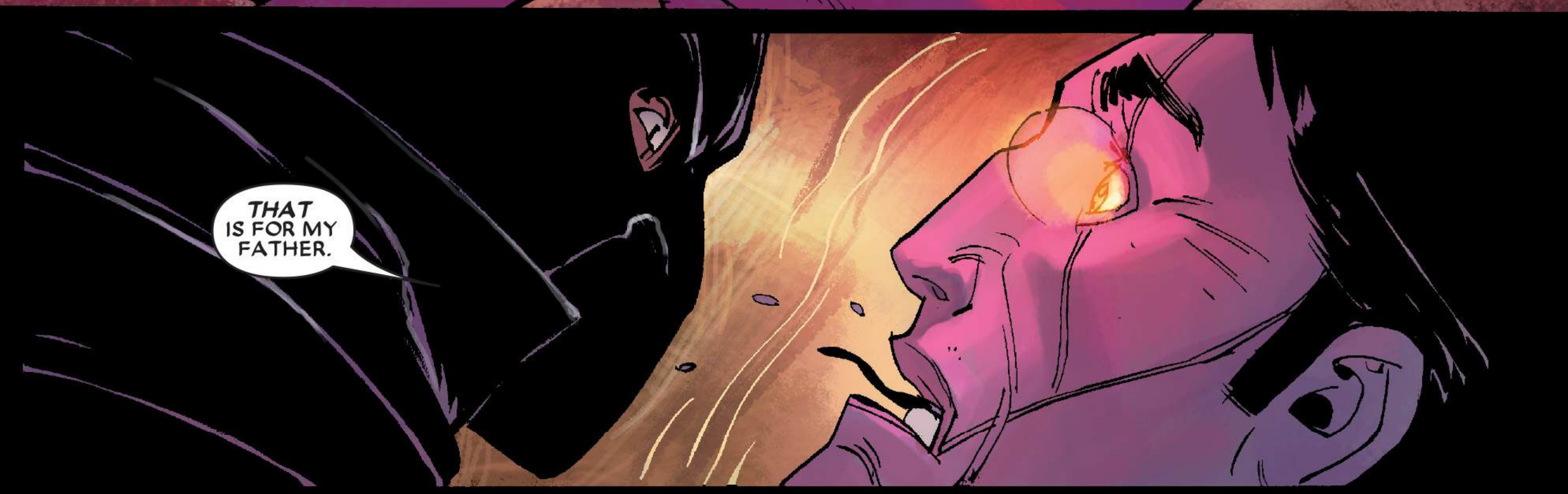
A **VIBRANIUM SHIELD** WILL.



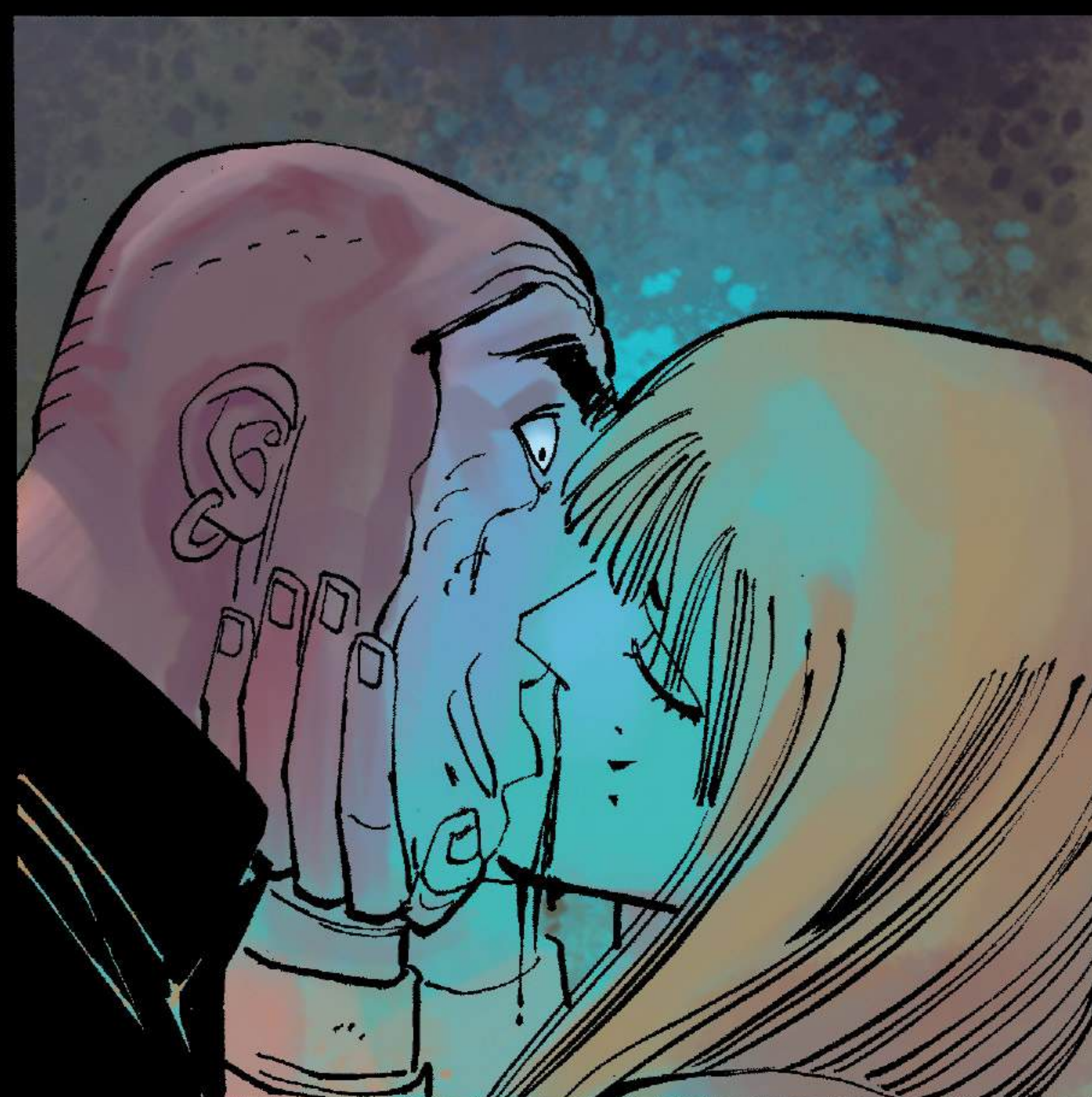
AND AS FOR YOU--



--AMANDLA!



THAT IS FOR MY FATHER.





GREETINGS, YOUR HIGHNESS. WE ARE MILITARY ASSISTANCE SENT BY THE UNITED STATES TO HELP SECURE YOUR BORDERS.

I DON'T MEAN TO INTRUDE ON WHAT MUST BE A VEERY POWERFUL MOMENT, KEEELING THE MAN WHO KEELED YOUR FATHAIR AND ALL...BUT DON'T YOU THINK WE BOTH NEED MEDICAL ATTENTION, OUI?



YOUR ASSISTANCE WAS NOT REQUESTED AND THE THREAT HAS BEEN NEUTRALIZED.

WE WILL SWEEP THE PERIMETER FOR ANY REMAINING--



ZOMBIE-- BROADCAST THIS MESSAGE BACK TO YOUR HANDLERS:



WAKANDA APPRECIATES THE OFFER OF ASSISTANCE FROM THE UNITED STATES. HOWEVER, YOUR HELP IS NOT NEEDED.

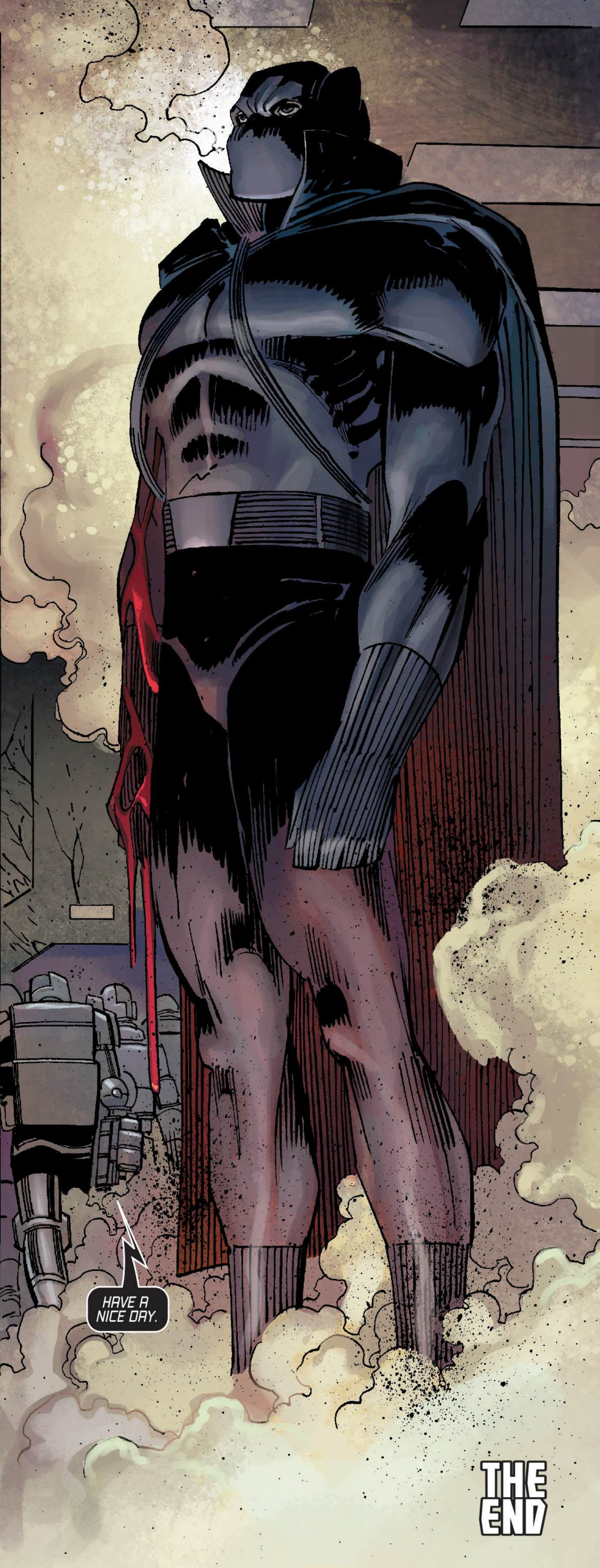


IF YOU REMAIN ON WAKANDAN SOIL FOR MORE THAN ONE HOUR, YOU WILL BE CONSIDERED AN INVADING FORCE AND WILL BE DEALT WITH ACCORDINGLY.



...
MESSAGE
RECEIVED.

WE'LL BE
HEADING
BACK TO
BASE.



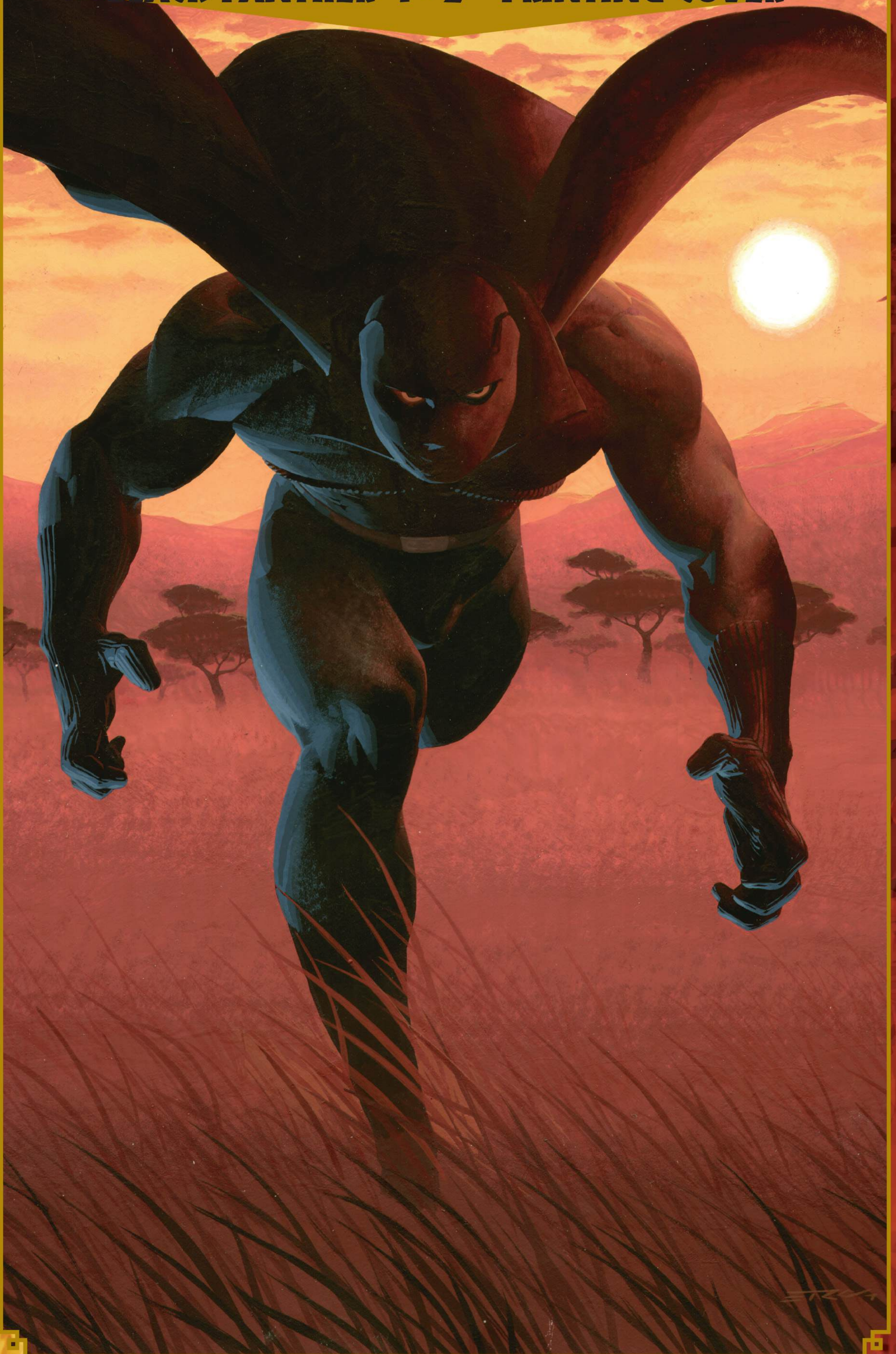
HAVE A
NICE DAY.

THE
END

BLACK PANTHER #1 • VARIANT COVER



BLACK PANTHER #1 • 2ND PRINTING COVER



THE BLACK PANTHER: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW AND A LOOK TO THE FUTURE. BY REGINALD HUDLIN

When the Black Panther debuted in the '60s, he was so cool, so perfect a character in concept and execution it's hard to believe it was done by two white guys. But when the white guys in question were Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, then it makes sense. But to truly appreciate their achievement, it's worth putting it in context: No black super hero before or after the Black Panther is as cool as the Black Panther. Sure, others come close. Luke Cage is as brilliant a Marvel response to blaxploitation as Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. was to the James Bond/super spy trend. And the Milestone line of comics was wonderful and smart.

But the Black Panther is STILL The Man.

He's the king of his own country! He's rich! He's tough enough to defeat the Fantastic Four and Captain America! He's suave and sophisticated! He's got cool super-technology! And his name is...THE BLACK PANTHER. Just the name alone was so ahead of its time. (I wonder if the Black Panther Party in Oakland had gotten famous first, would Stan have used the name anyway? Well, he didn't change it, so double-kudos to him!)

The Panther's appearances in the Lee/Kirby issues of the FANTASTIC FOUR and CAPTAIN AMERICA were great, but nothing after that has been able to recapture the original magic. He never made much of an impression on me during any of his AVENGERS stints, and I never liked the McGregor-written series in JUNGLE ACTION. I even preferred the loopy but fun late Kirby series to McGregor's morose characters that endlessly droned on with overflowing captions with even more yakkety yakking. Enough already!

The Priest run on the PANTHER gave a much-needed shot in the arm to the character. His power level was restored to the point that the Panther had contingency plans to take on Galactus. Great! And he got two beautiful female bodyguards/concubines who can kick @\$\$. Great! He kicked it with fellow regents Namor and Doom. Great! He joined the Avengers to spy on them? The best idea yet!

The question is, how do we take the character to the next level?

Let's start by defining who he IS.

The Black Panther is the Black Captain America. He's the embodiment of the ideals of a people. As Americans, we feel good when we read Captain America because he reminds us of the potential of how good America can be, if, of course, we have the convictions to live by the principles the country was founded on. As a black person, the Black Panther should represent the fulfillment of the potential of the Motherland.

For a long time, the Black American equivalent of that ideal was represented by Sidney Poitier, a man who maintained his dignity even in degrading situations. But since the '80s, that ideal has shifted. In the post-integration, post-Reagan era, the new ideal is Spike Lee or Sean "Puffy" Combs, the artist/businessman hero who profits from his own cultural integrity. In other words, the man who has it all — the money, the politics and the cool and style of black culture.

What those celebrities named, along with Malcolm X, Miles Davis and Muhammad Ali, all have in common, is the knowledge that the act of being a black man in white America is an inherent act of rebellion. They are WILLING to be bad@\$\$es.

That's what hip hop is all about. Being a bad@\$\$\$. Everyone wants to be a bad@\$\$\$. That's why white kids have always loved black music — whether it's jazz, rock and roll or hip hop, black

music is the music of bad@\$\$es, and plugging into that culture makes a suburban white kid feel like a bad@\$\$, too. And for a generation of white kids who have grown up without an “Elvis”—a white interpreter of black culture — their appreciation of edgy street culture is shocking even to me.

I say all this because the harder the Panther is, the more appealing he is to both black AND white audiences.

All we’ve got to do is let the Panther be who he is set up to be. After all, he’s a Wakandan. Wakandans are so bad@\$\$ THEY’VE NEVER BEEN CONQUERED.

This is important. There are some countries that are like doormats — everybody’s kicked their @\$\$ at one point or another. But there are other peoples in the world — Vietnam comes to mind — that kick the @\$\$ of everyone who messes with them, superpower or not.

The Wakandans are such people. I figure every 50 years or so, somebody tries to make a move on them, and they have to prove the point to that generation of would-be conquerors:

DON’T EVEN TRY IT!

The independence of the Wakandan people has got to be galling to the rest of the world for a lot of reasons. First of all, the rest of Africa has been carved up like a Christmas turkey. England, Germany, France, Belgium, the United States, the Soviet Union, Islamic and Christian invaders...so many empires have taken large chunks of land and resources for their own. Even after the independence movements of the ’60s, any leader that was too competent got killed (like, say, Patrice Lumumba). So the colonial powers still controlled their territories through greedy thugs like Bokassa and Mubutu.

Not only does Wakanda’s independence block the total dominance of Africa by colonial powers, its cultural evolution has gone unchecked for centuries. They were ahead of us a thousand years ago. And no one has colonized them, burned their books, erased their language, or broken their spirits.

Unfettered by the yoke of colonization, they have created a hi-tech, ecologically sound paradise that makes the rest of the world seem primitive by comparison. If the right company got their hands on their gadgets, their medicines, their R&D, they would vault themselves a century ahead of their competitors.

But the Wakandans can’t be bought out. This isn’t a bunch of starving orphans pimped by dictators who’ll sell out for a sizable contribution to their Swiss bank account. Wakandans are led by the Black Panthers, a warrior cult that serves as the religious, political and military head of the country. That tower in the center of the country is like a big middle finger to the rest of the world — literally. Their borders are tightly shut and they deal with the world on their own terms...or not at all.

The first scene of the book would be in the 10th century. Start on some neighboring tribe walking across the savannah looking for its next conquest. They roll on Wakanda. But the Wakandans kick their @\$\$, using man-sized beartraps, crossbows and other technology that even Europeans didn’t have at the time.

Cut to the turn of the century. The Boers have just finished conquering South Africa and are now moving on Wakanda. They’ve got rifles, they’ve got gatling guns. But the Wakandans have a magnetic based weapon that causes the Boer weapons to backfire, maiming and killing half their troops. The Panthers then move in, leaving one man alive, as they usually do, to spread the word — **DON’T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT.**

We see Captain America getting his butt whipped by T’Chaka during World War Two. Yeah, they will whip anybody’s butt.

Okay, let me stop. I’m starting on scenes and I haven’t even given an overview yet.

The first six issues of the book will be a re-telling of the Panther's origin. That hasn't been done during this incarnation of the Panther, and is the best way to set the tone for the book.

It will be a version without the Fantastic Four, much like the Lee/Kirby SILVER SURFER graphic novel from the '70s, which retold his origin without the FF's involvement in the story.

The first six issues will essentially be my version of what the BLACK PANTHER MOVIE should be. But no matter what happens with the movie, or if the movie ever happens, there will be a TPB that people can pick up and see the character done right. No matter how horrible the Joel Schumacher BATMAN movies are, they cannot erase the greatness of THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS or BATMAN: YEAR ONE. Hopefully, this book will do the same for T'Challa.

I know some people at Marvel feel the Panther's base being in Africa is a problem. It shouldn't be. The Panther should move back and forth between Wakanda and the rest of the world the same way Thor moves between Asgard and Earth. He's an INTERNATIONAL player who's equally at home at the Davos Conference in Switzerland, meeting with Colin Powell in D.C., kicking it in Harlem with Bill Clinton and Al Sharpton, and brokering deals off the coast of Cuba with Fidel Castro and Prince Namor.

A great hero is defined by his villains. The Panther doesn't have his equivalents to Dr. Doom, the Red Skull, or Magneto. Instead he's got a guy wearing a white gorilla fur. I don't even know that loser's name, but he will never be seen inside the pages of the book I write.

Since the first story arc will be his origin, the main villain will be Klaw...but not the Murderous Master of Sound that he was in the 1960s. No way. Our villain is a South African who was named after his ancestor, who was one of the Boers who led the abortive attempt to invade Wakanda a century ago. In an act of revenge for the murder of his great-grandfather, and as part of a conspiracy to overthrow Wakanda, Klaw murdered T'Chaka. As he was about to kill the rest of the royal family, T'Challa, T'Chaka's son, blows Klaw's hand off, LITERALLY disarming him.

Now Klaw is equipped with a cybernetic hand that can turn into any number of murderous devices. He's invading Wakanda again, with a small commando squad of superpowered killers, to kill T'Challa and take over Wakanda.

But he's not the only person with the bright idea to invade Wakanda. Is the Panther ready to wage war at home — on multiple fronts?

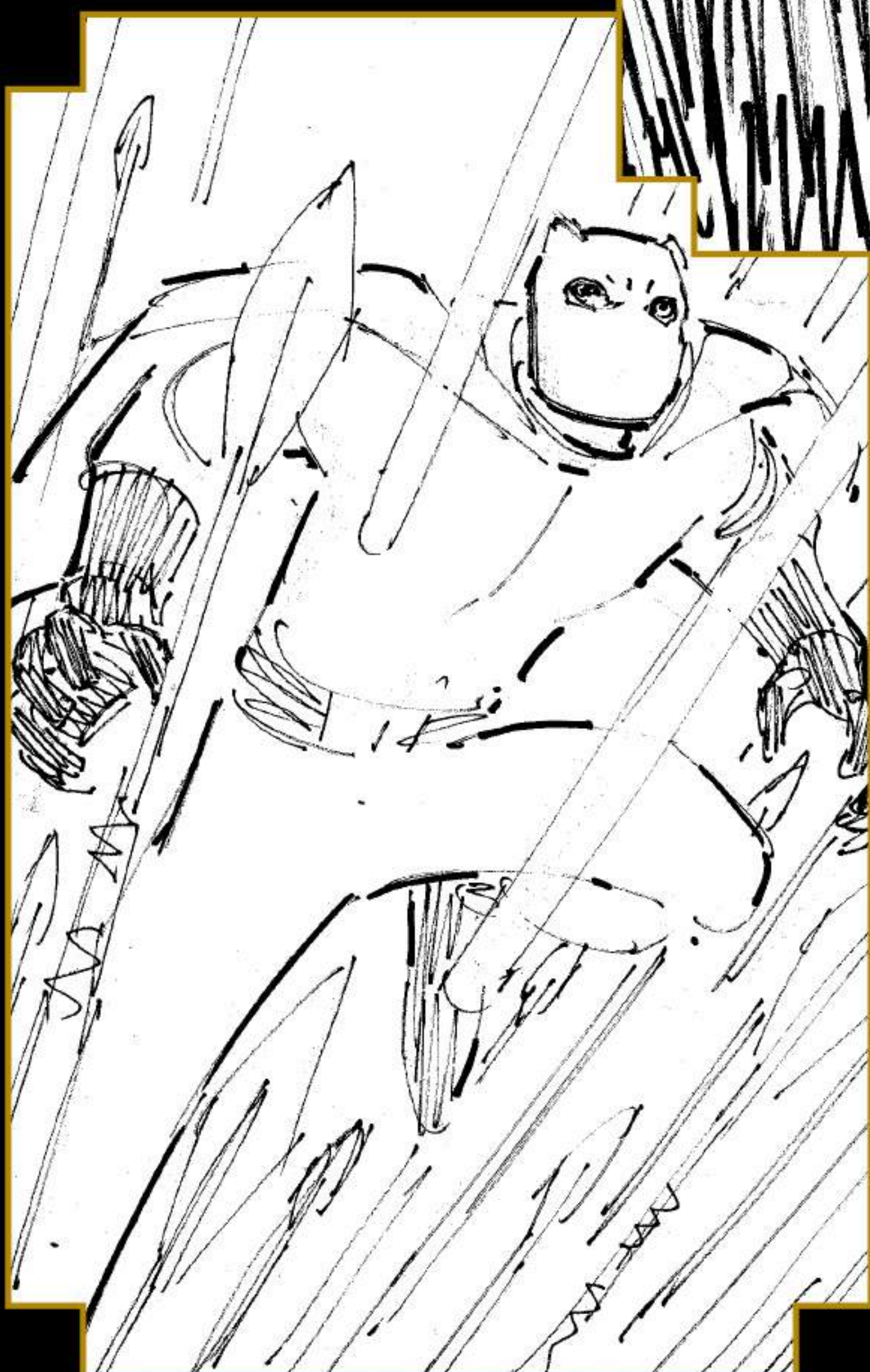
And will he be betrayed from within?

Okay, that's not a whole pitch, but it's a start. I won't get into the second story arc with Cage, Shang-Chi, Photon and Storm...but that's gonna be even better.

— Reginald Hudlin



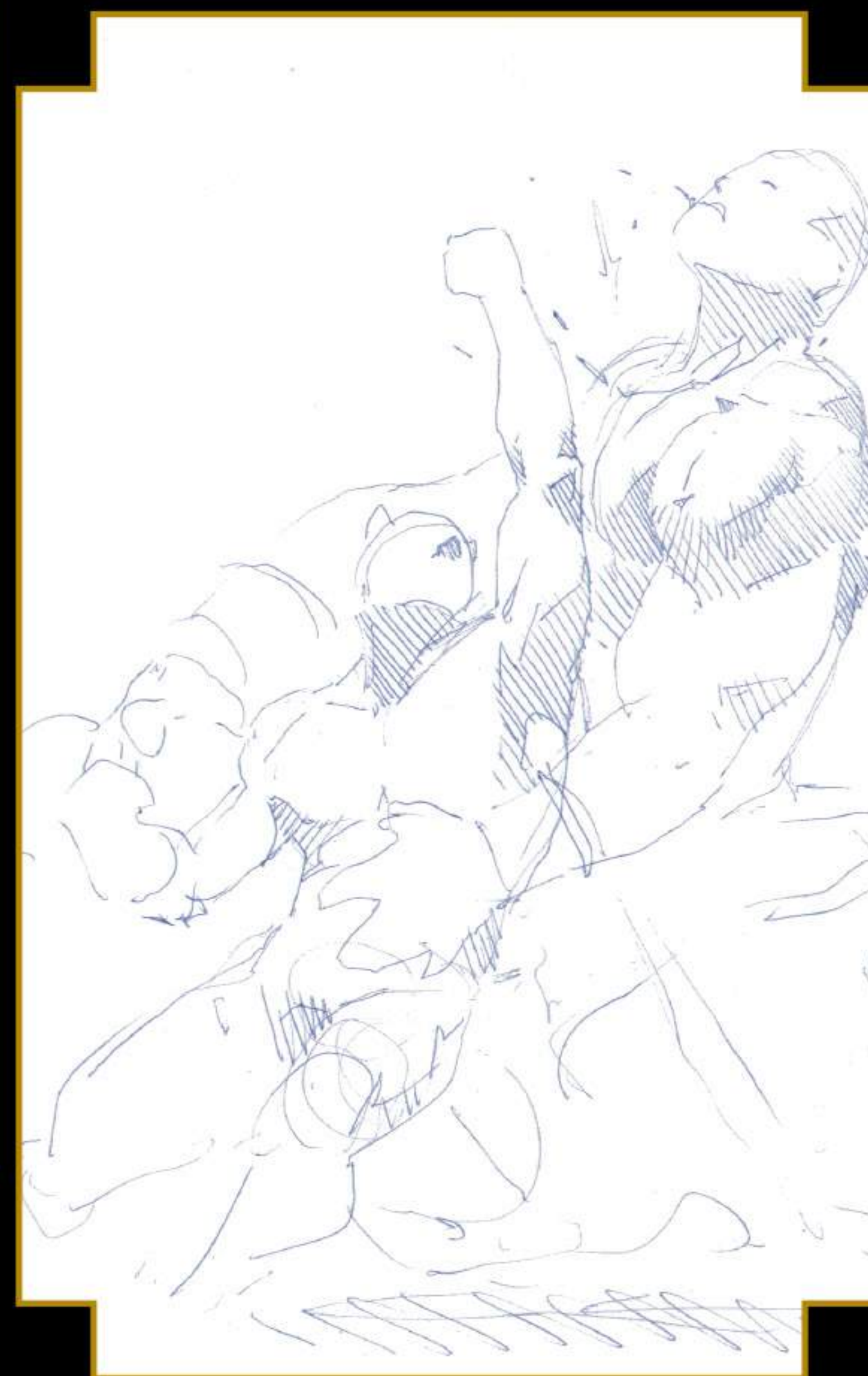
BLACK PANTHER #1 COVER SKETCHES BY JOHN ROMITA JR.



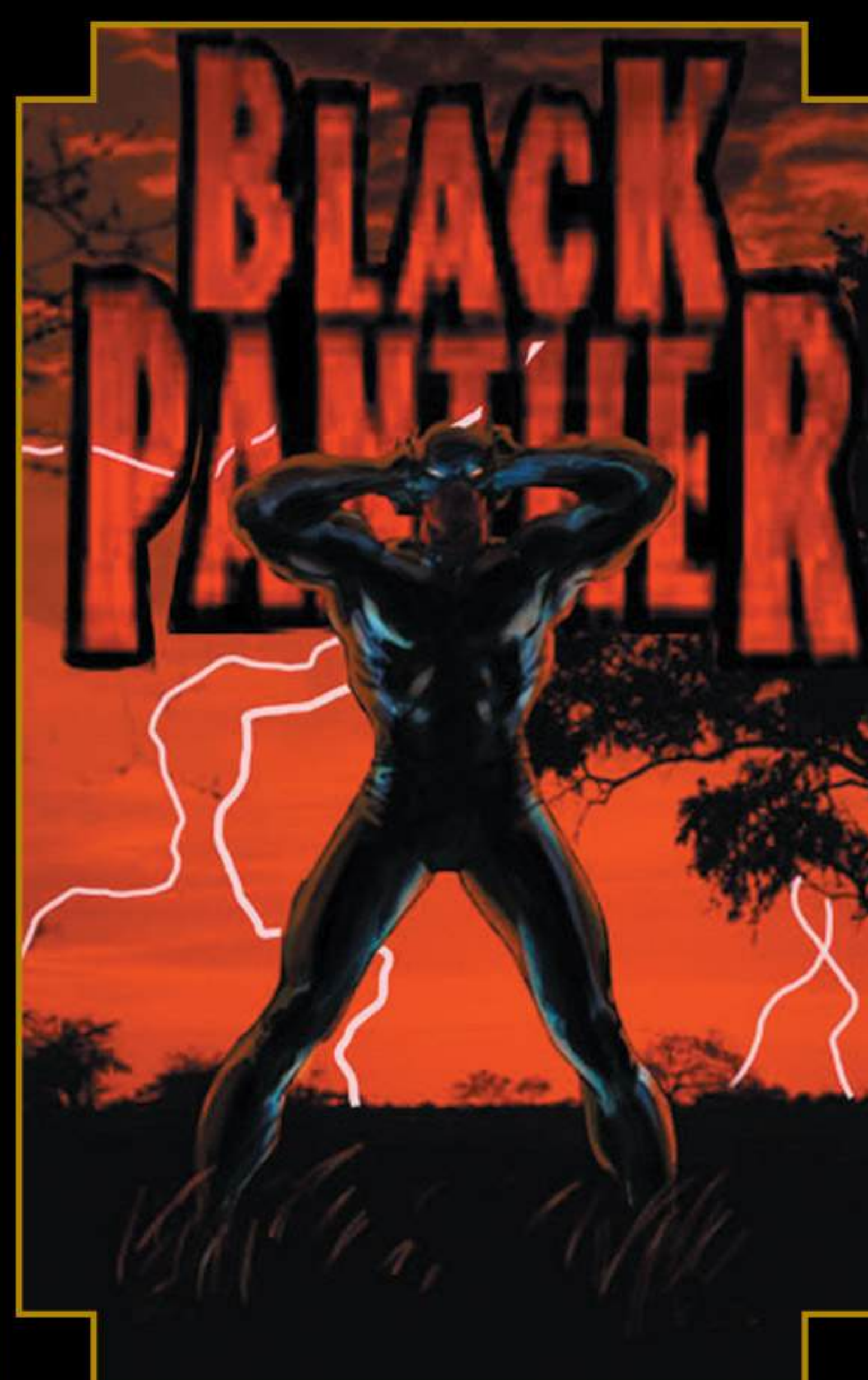
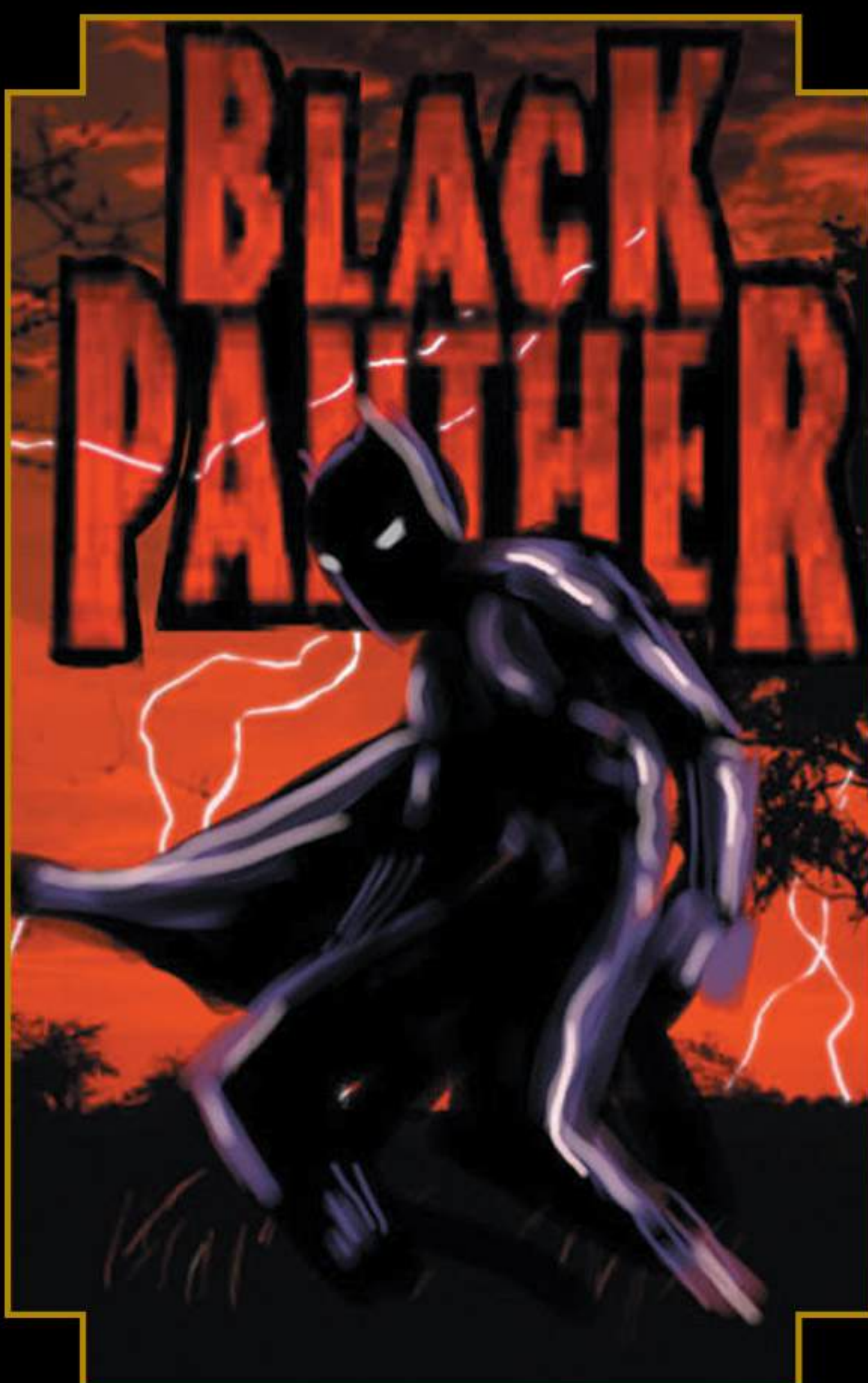
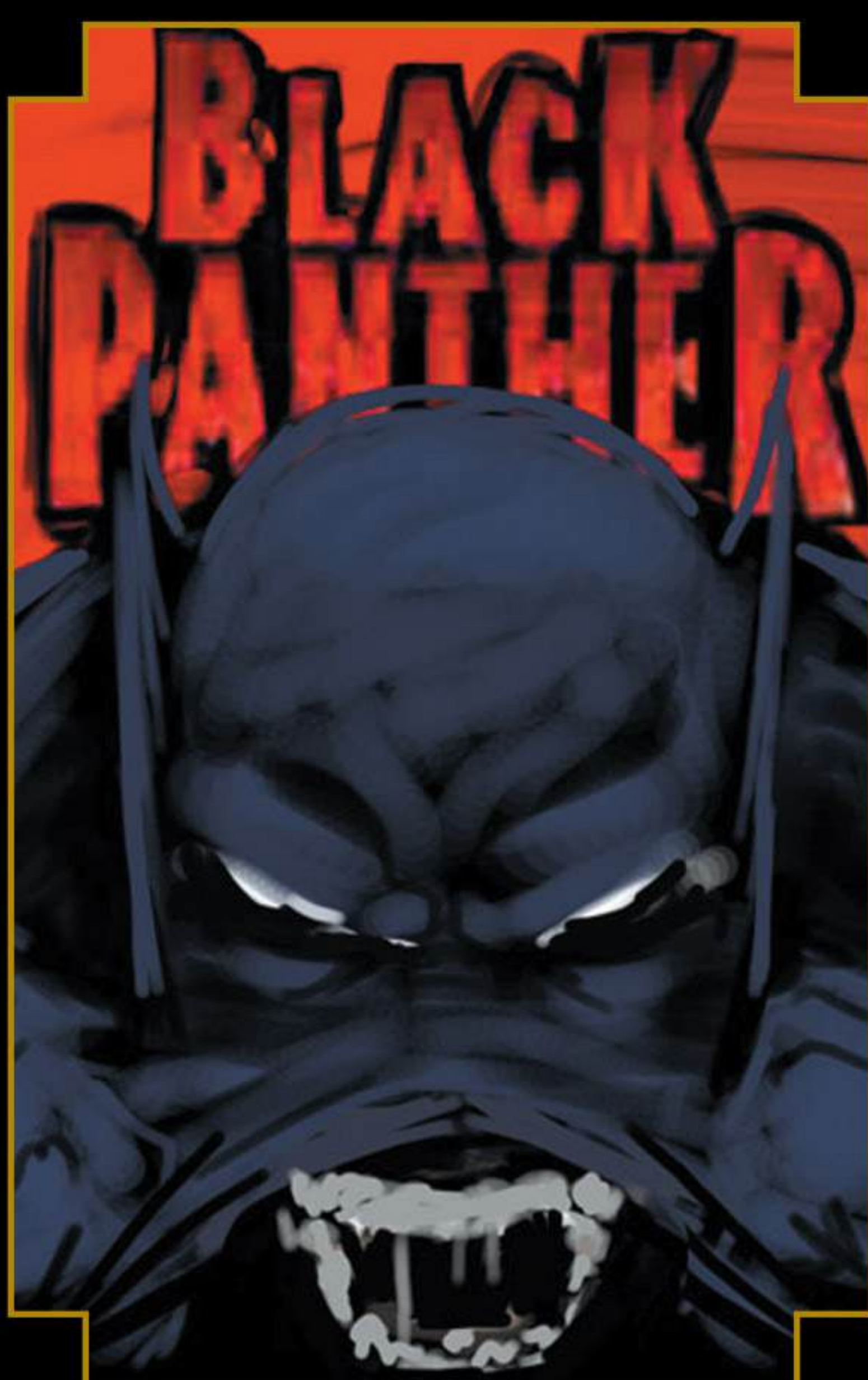
**BLACK PANTHER #1 COVER
PENCILS BY JOHN ROMITA JR.
INKS BY KLAUS JANSON**



BLACK PANTHER #2 COVER SKETCHES BY ESAD RIBIC



BLACK PANTHER #6 COVER CONCEPTS BY KAARE ANDREWS



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Introducing:
THE SENSATIONAL
**BLACK
PANTHER!**



THE FABULOUS F.F. ARE TRAPPED IN THE INCREDIBLE REALM OF.

"THE BLACK PANTHER!"

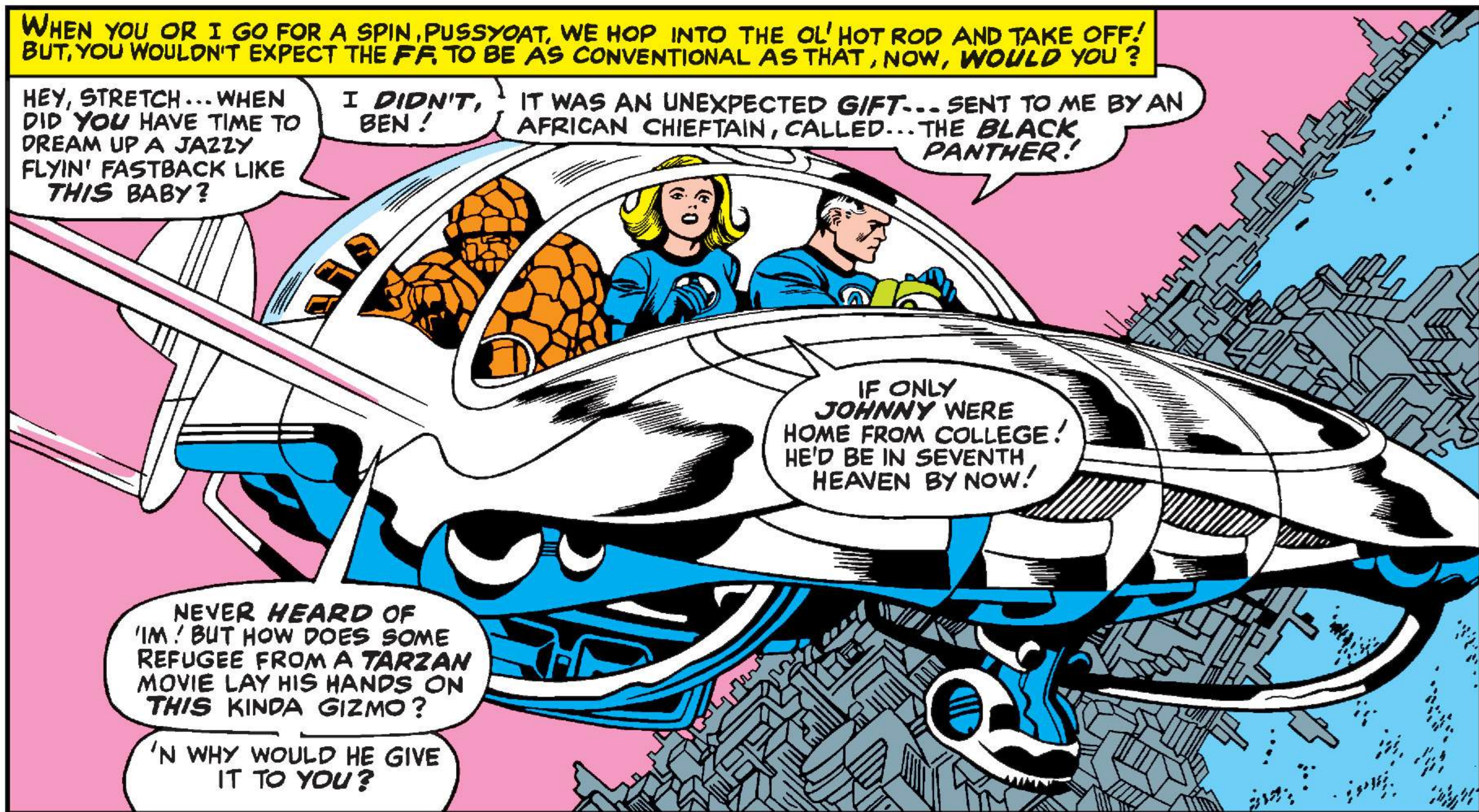
ALSO
FEATURING:
The WAY-OUT
and WONDERFUL
**WYATT
WINGFOOT!**



IT HAD TO BE
TOLD... AS ONLY
MIGHTY MARVEL
COULD TELL IT!

SCRIPT BY: SMILIN' **STAN LEE**
ART BY: JOLLY **JACKIE KIRBY**
INKING BY: GENTLEMAN **JOE SINNOTT**
LETTERING BY: HAMMY **SAMMY ROSEN**

VOTED
THE GREATEST
TALE OF THE MONTH!
(BY STAN AND JACK!)



WHEN YOU OR I GO FOR A SPIN, PUSSYCAT, WE HOP INTO THE OL' HOT ROD AND TAKE OFF! BUT, YOU WOULDN'T EXPECT THE **FA** TO BE AS CONVENTIONAL AS THAT, NOW, WOULD YOU?

HEY, STRETCH... WHEN DID YOU HAVE TIME TO DREAM UP A JAZZY FLYIN' FASTBACK LIKE THIS BABY?

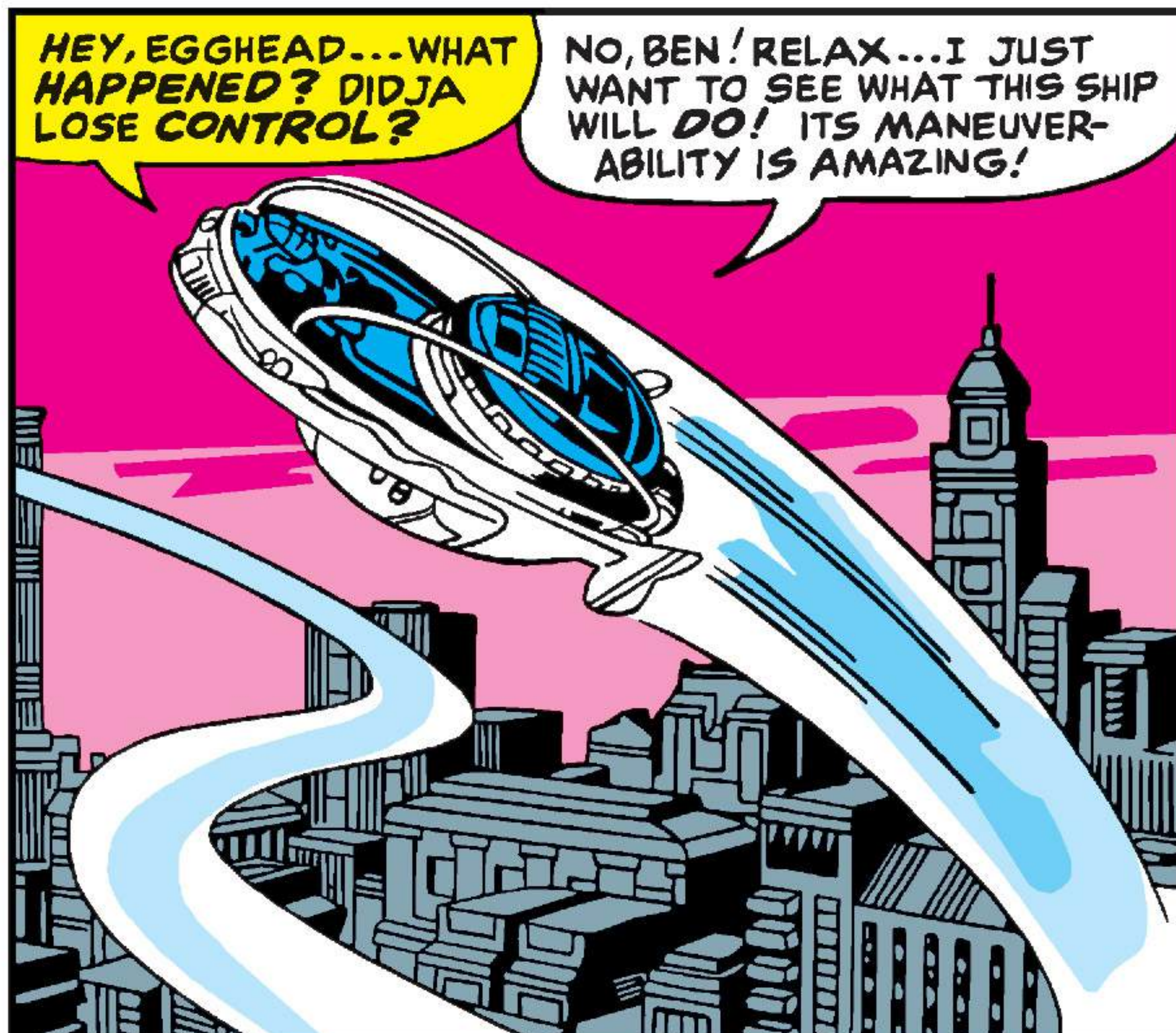
I DIDN'T, BEN!

IT WAS AN UNEXPECTED GIFT... SENT TO ME BY AN AFRICAN CHIEFTAIN, CALLED... THE **BLACK PANTHER**!

IF ONLY JOHNNY WERE HOME FROM COLLEGE! HE'D BE IN SEVENTH HEAVEN BY NOW!

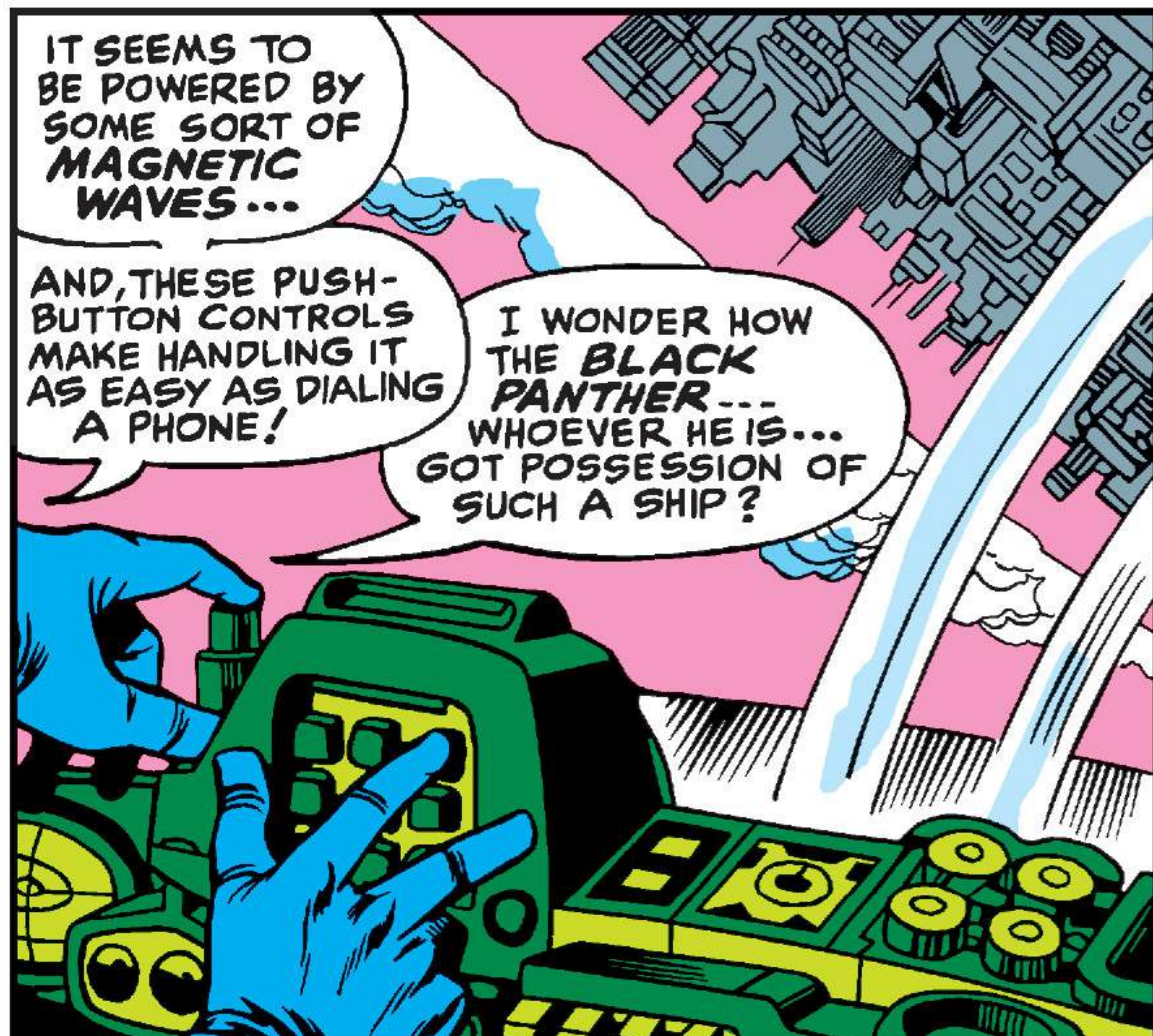
NEVER HEARD OF 'IM! BUT HOW DOES SOME REFUGEE FROM A TARZAN MOVIE LAY HIS HANDS ON THIS KINDA GIZMO?

'N WHY WOULD HE GIVE IT TO YOU?



HEY, EGGHEAD... WHAT HAPPENED? DIDJA LOSE CONTROL?

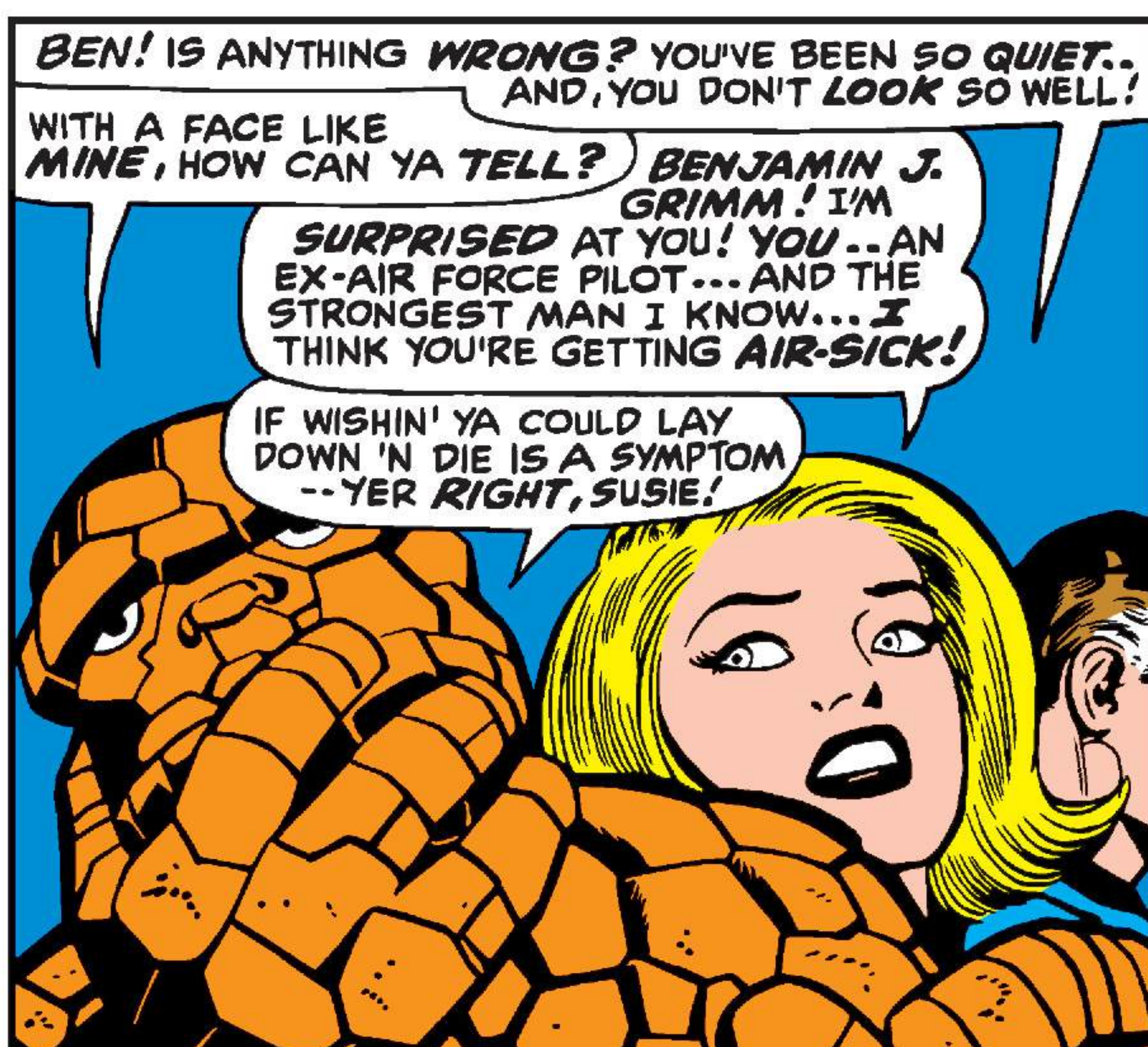
NO, BEN! RELAX... I JUST WANT TO SEE WHAT THIS SHIP WILL DO! ITS MANEUVERABILITY IS AMAZING!



IT SEEMS TO BE POWERED BY SOME SORT OF MAGNETIC WAVES...

AND, THESE PUSH-BUTTON CONTROLS MAKE HANDLING IT AS EASY AS DIALING A PHONE!

I WONDER HOW THE **BLACK PANTHER**... WHOEVER HE IS... GOT POSSESSION OF SUCH A SHIP?

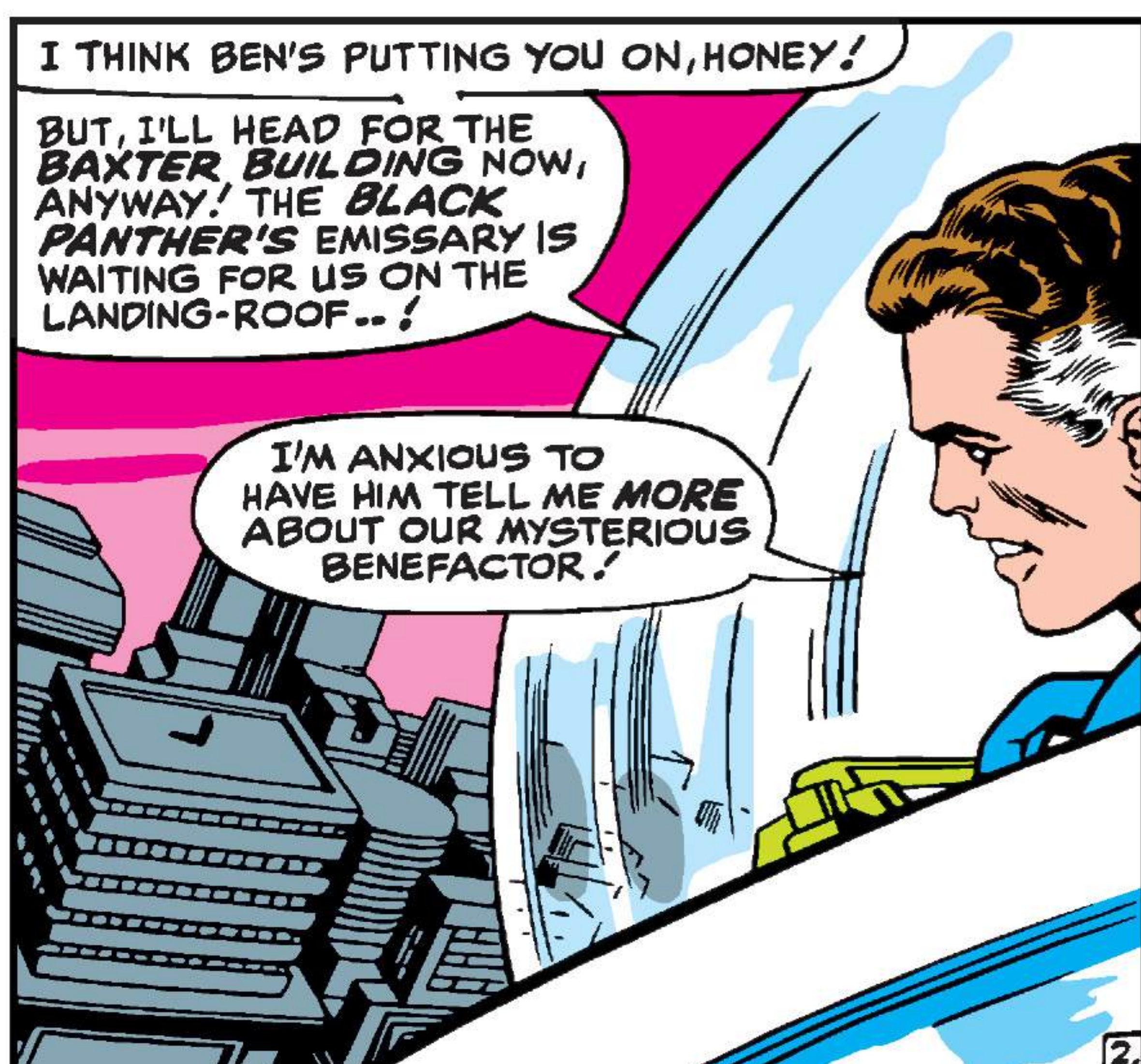


BEN! IS ANYTHING WRONG? YOU'VE BEEN SO QUIET.. AND, YOU DON'T LOOK SO WELL!

WITH A FACE LIKE MINE, HOW CAN YA TELL?

BENJAMIN J. GRIMM! I'M SURPRISED AT YOU! YOU... AN EX-AIR FORCE PILOT... AND THE STRONGEST MAN I KNOW... I THINK YOU'RE GETTING AIR-SICK!

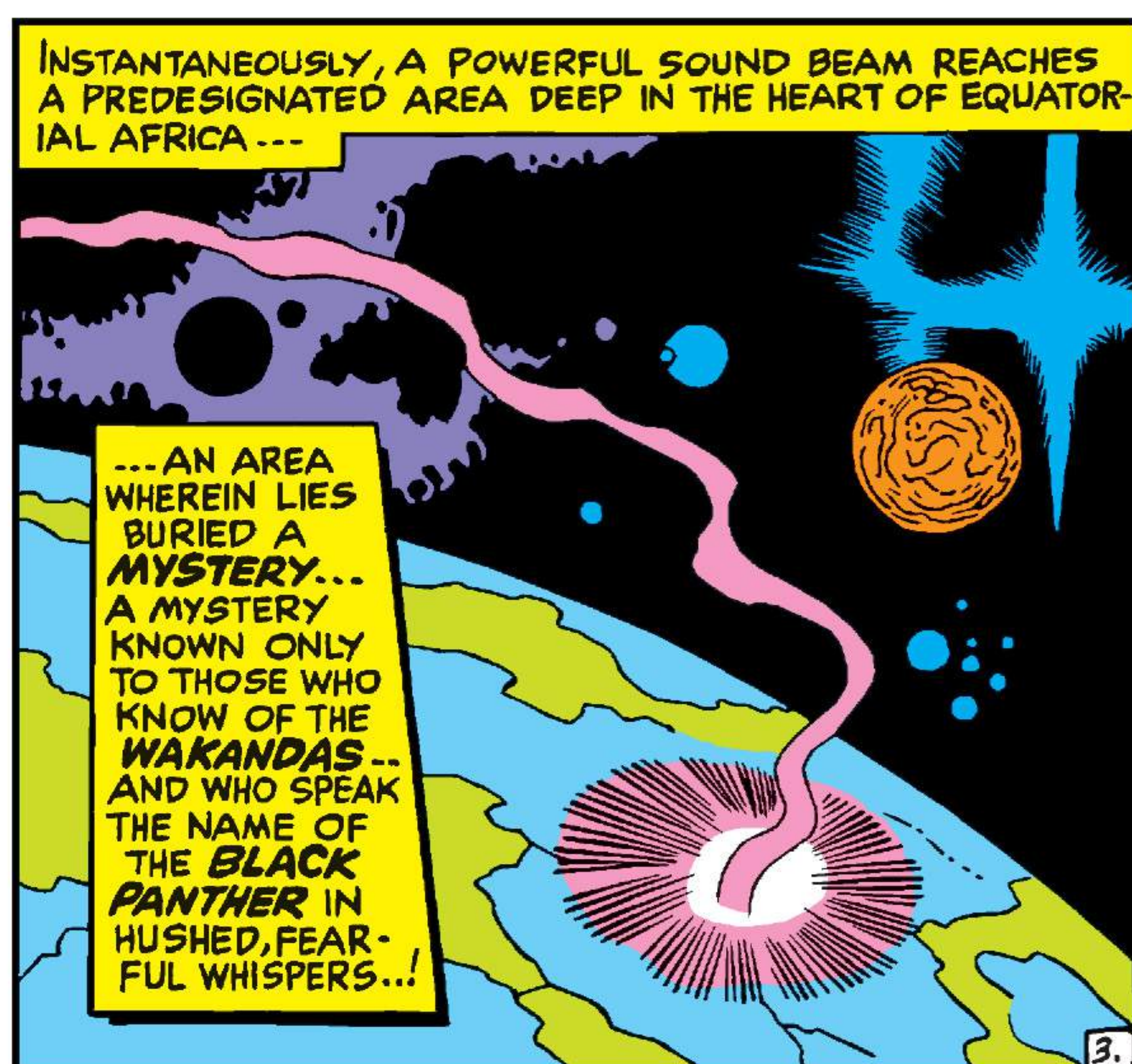
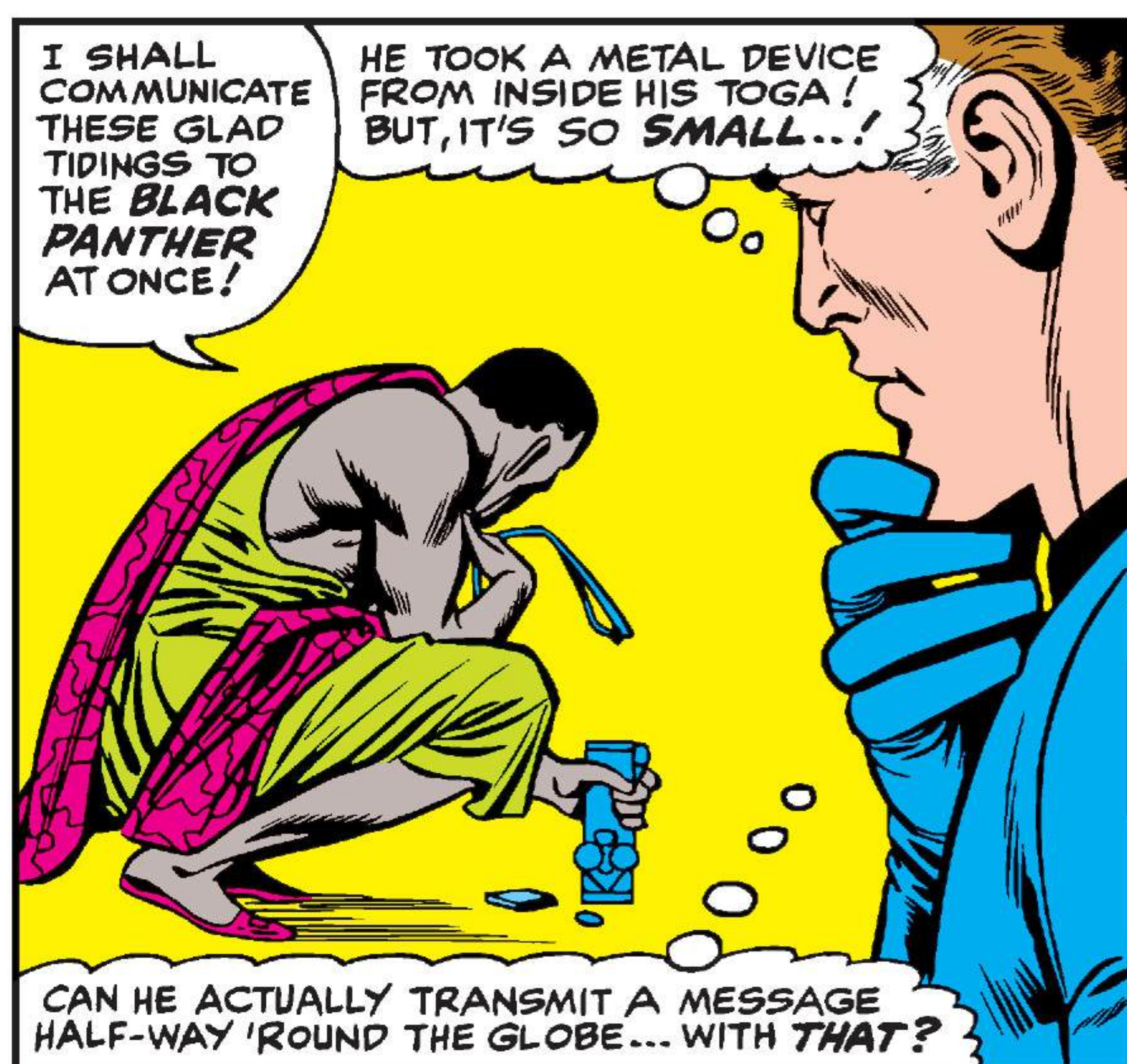
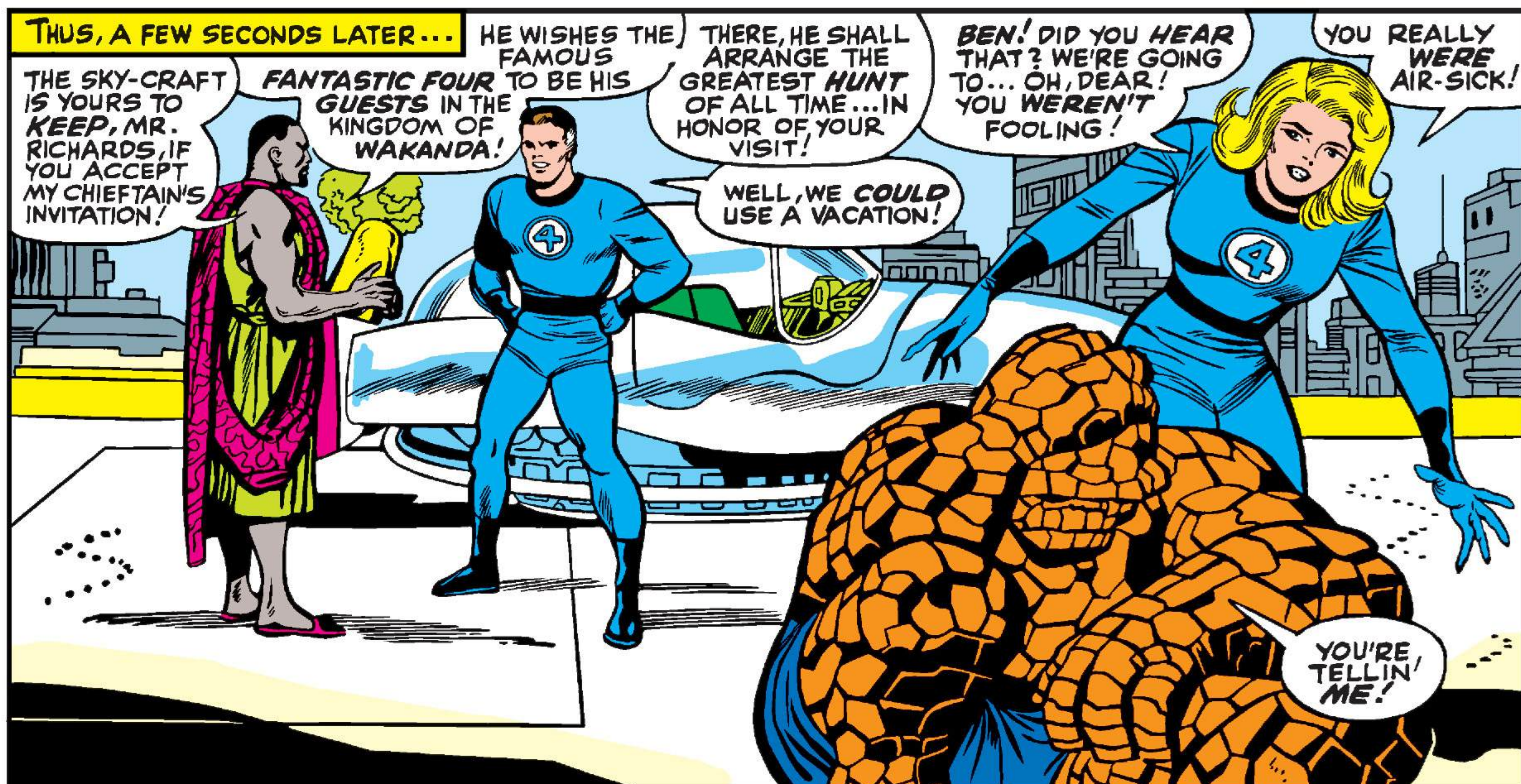
IF WISHIN' YA COULD LAY DOWN 'N DIE IS A SYMPTOM --YER RIGHT, SUSIE!



I THINK BEN'S PUTTING YOU ON, HONEY!

BUT, I'LL HEAD FOR THE BAXTER BUILDING NOW, ANYWAY! THE **BLACK PANTHER**'S EMISSARY IS WAITING FOR US ON THE LANDING-ROOF..!

I'M ANXIOUS TO HAVE HIM TELL ME MORE ABOUT OUR MYSTERIOUS BENEFACTOR!



BUT NOW, AS THE **FANTASTIC FOUR** PREPARE FOR THEIR MOMENTOUS JOURNEY, LET US DO WHAT FEW WESTERN MEN HAVE EVER DONE...LET US GAZE UPON THE ENTHRONED FIGURE OF HIM WHO RULES THE WAKANDAS...

MIGHTY CHIEFTAIN! THE SIGNAL HAS BEEN RECEIVED! YOUR OFFER IS ACCEPTED! THE **FANTASTIC FOUR** WILL COME TO WAKANDA!

AS I KNEW THEY WOULD! IT IS GOOD!

NOW, LET THE PREPARATIONS BEGIN! THIS SHALL BE THE GREATEST HUNT OF ALL!



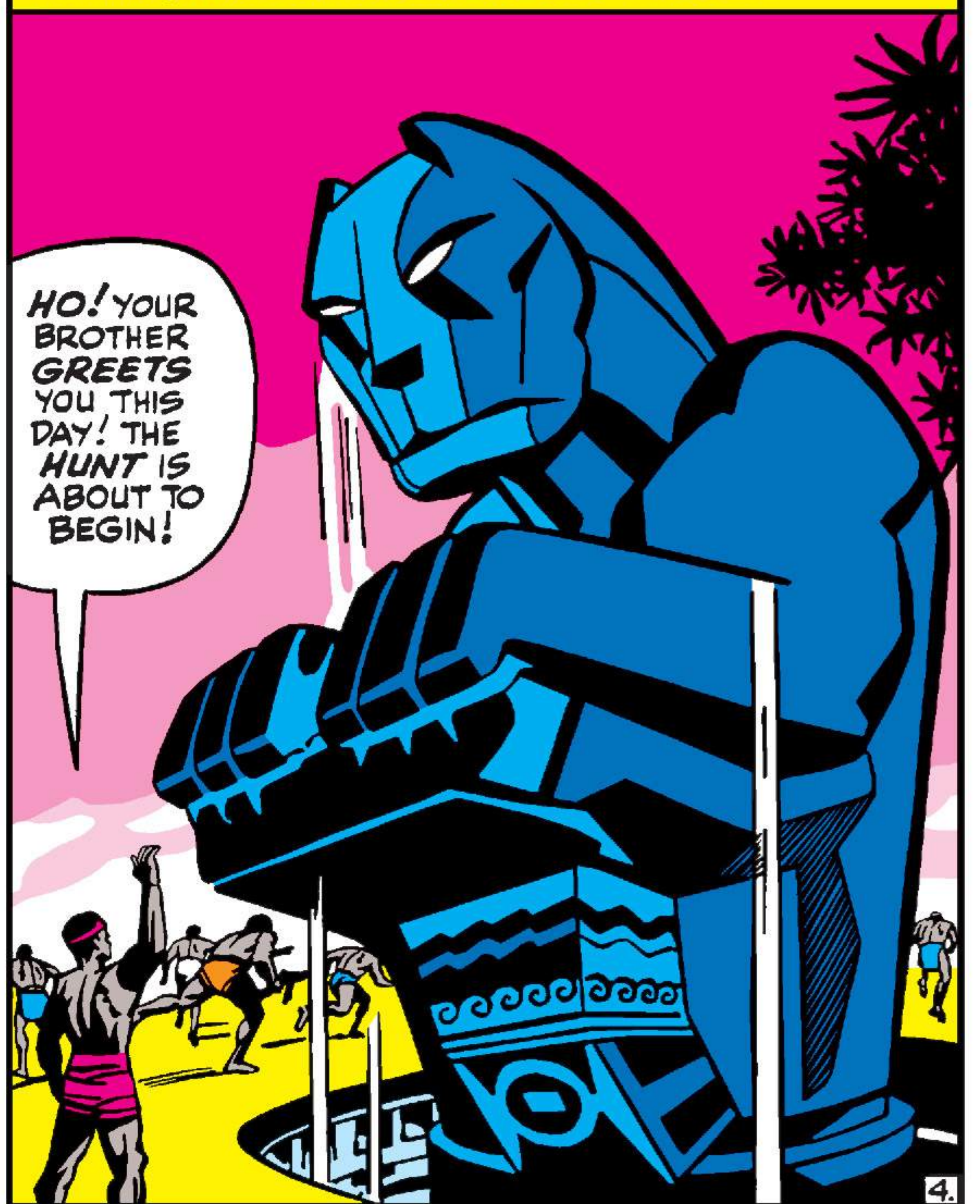
RAISE THE TOTEM! LET THE RITUAL BEGIN!

THE TIME HAS COME FOR THE **BLACK PANTHER** TO STALK ONCE MORE!



THEN, AT A SINGLE GESTURE FROM THE PROUD CHIEFTAIN OF THE WAKANDAS, A STRANGE, CARVED FIGURE SWIFTLY RISES FROM ITS RESTING PLACE WITHIN A HIDDEN UNDERGROUND SILO...

HO! YOUR BROTHER GREET'S YOU THIS DAY! THE HUNT IS ABOUT TO BEGIN!



DEFTLY PUSHING A SERIES OF DELICATE **CONTROL BUTTONS** AT THE BASE OF THE GIGANTIC, FELINE FIGURE, THE POWERFULLY-BUILT MONARCH EXPOSES A BANK OF **ELECTRONIC COMPUTERS**, WITH WHICH HE CONTROLS THE MYRIAD WONDERS OF HIS MYSTERIOUS JUNGLE EMPIRE --!

ALL DEVICES ARE FULLY OPERATIONAL!

AND SO I REMOVE MY **STALKING COSTUME** FROM ITS CAREFULLY CONCEALED COMPARTMENT!

NOW, LET THE FANTASTIC FOUR COME!

THE **BLACK PANTHER** SHALL GREET THEM... AS THEY HAVE NEVER BEEN GREETED BEFORE!

WHILE, IN A QUIET ROOM IN NORTHFIELD DORMITORY, ON THE CAMPUS OF **METRO COLLEGE**, WE FIND...

I WONDER IF I PASSED TODAY'S EXAM?

I SURE DON'T WANT REED, SUE AND BEN TO BE **ASHAMED** OF ME!

NOTHING BOTHERS OL' WYATT! I'M SURPRISED HE EVEN MANAGED TO STAY AWAKE DURING THE TEST!

I CAN'T WAIT TILL **MORNING...** TO HEAD BACK HOME FOR VACATION!

IT'S HARD...HARDER THAN I *THOUGHT* IT WOULD BE... TO CONCENTRATE ON MY COURSES... WHEN I CAN'T GET **CRYSTAL** OUT OF MY MIND!

BUT, I'VE GOT TO KEEP **TRYING!** UNTIL REED CAN FIND SOME WAY TO BREAK THE **BARRIER** THAT HOLDS HER PRISONER,* THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO!

NOTHING BUT HOPE...AND DREAM...AND PRAY!

I'VE GOT TO SNAP OUT OF IT...AND I **WILL!** IF ONLY THE **EVENINGS** WEREN'T SO LONG...

* IF YOU MISSED F.F. #48, DON'T TELL US! YOU KNOW HOW UPSET WE GET! ... **SHAKY STAN.**

HEY!! HOLY HANNAH!! WHAT THE ...?!!

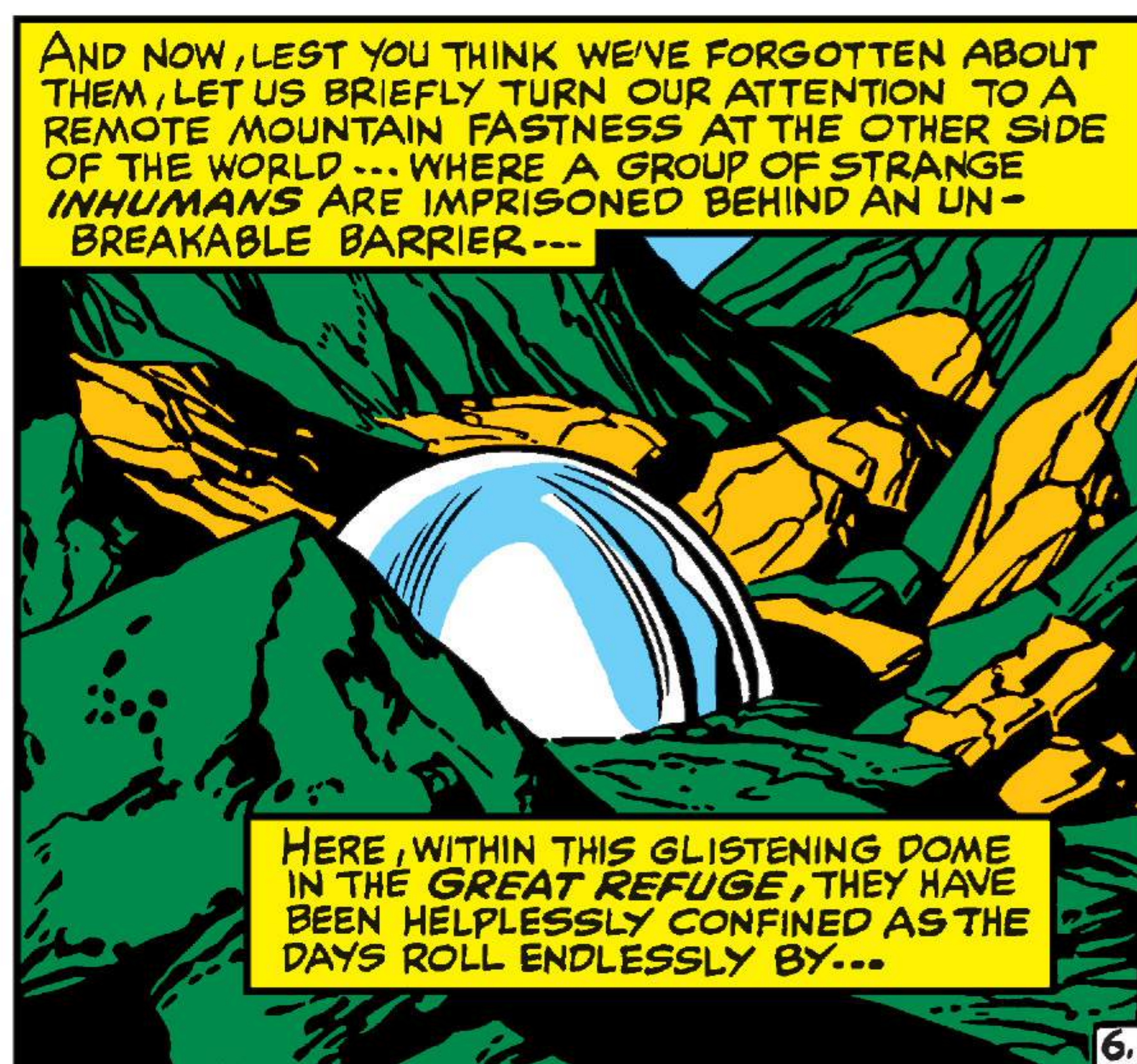
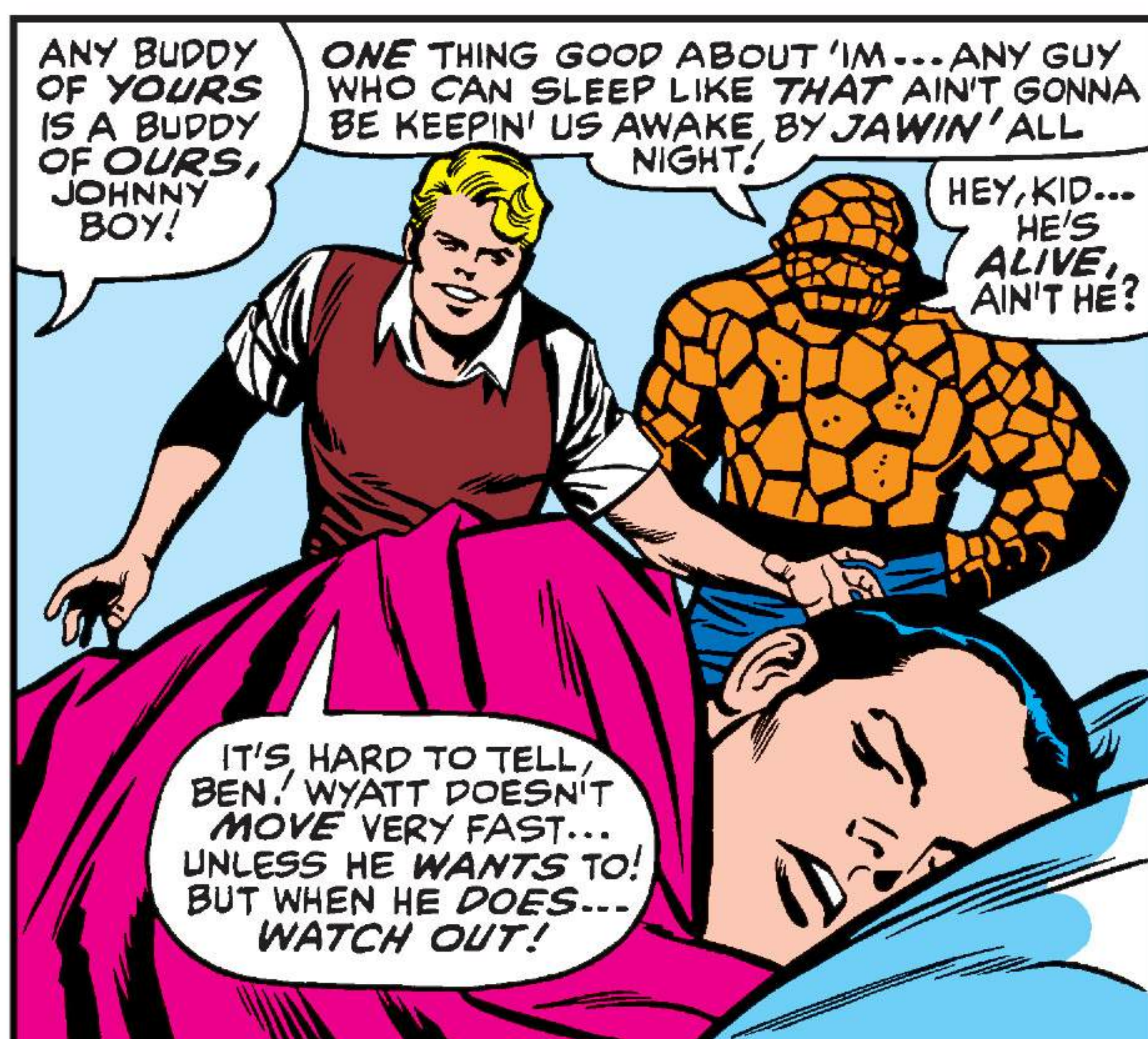
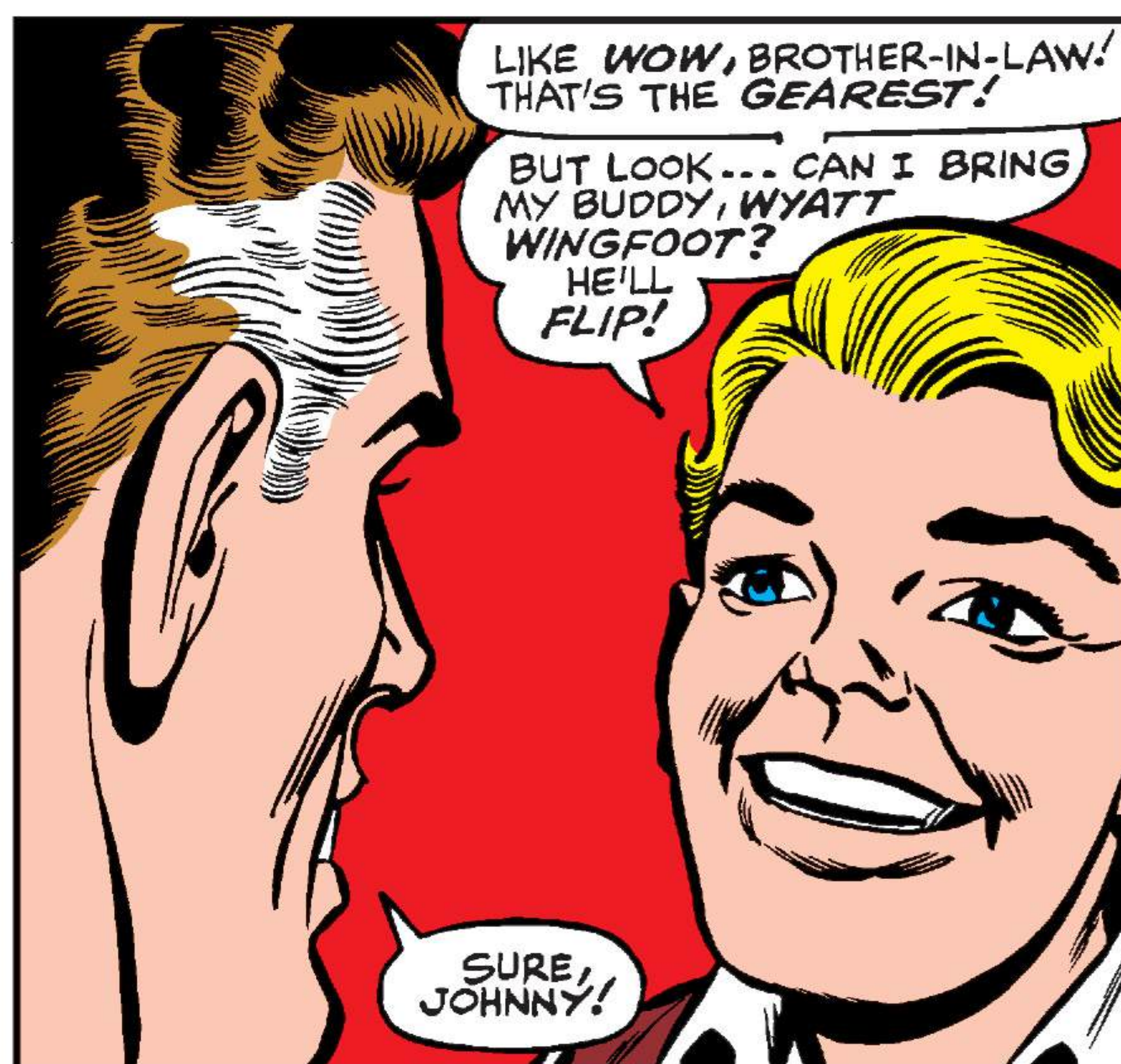
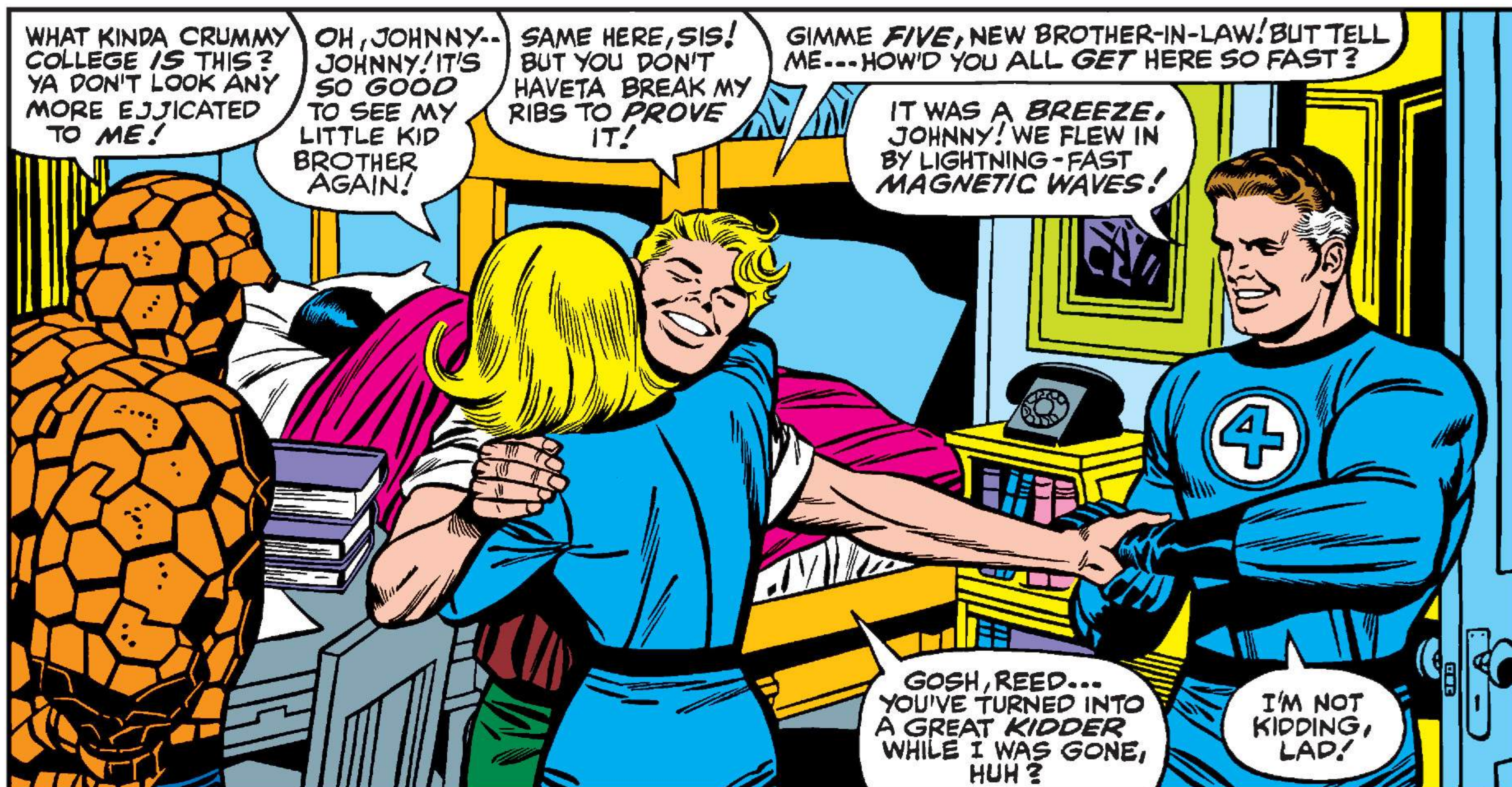
SURPRISE!

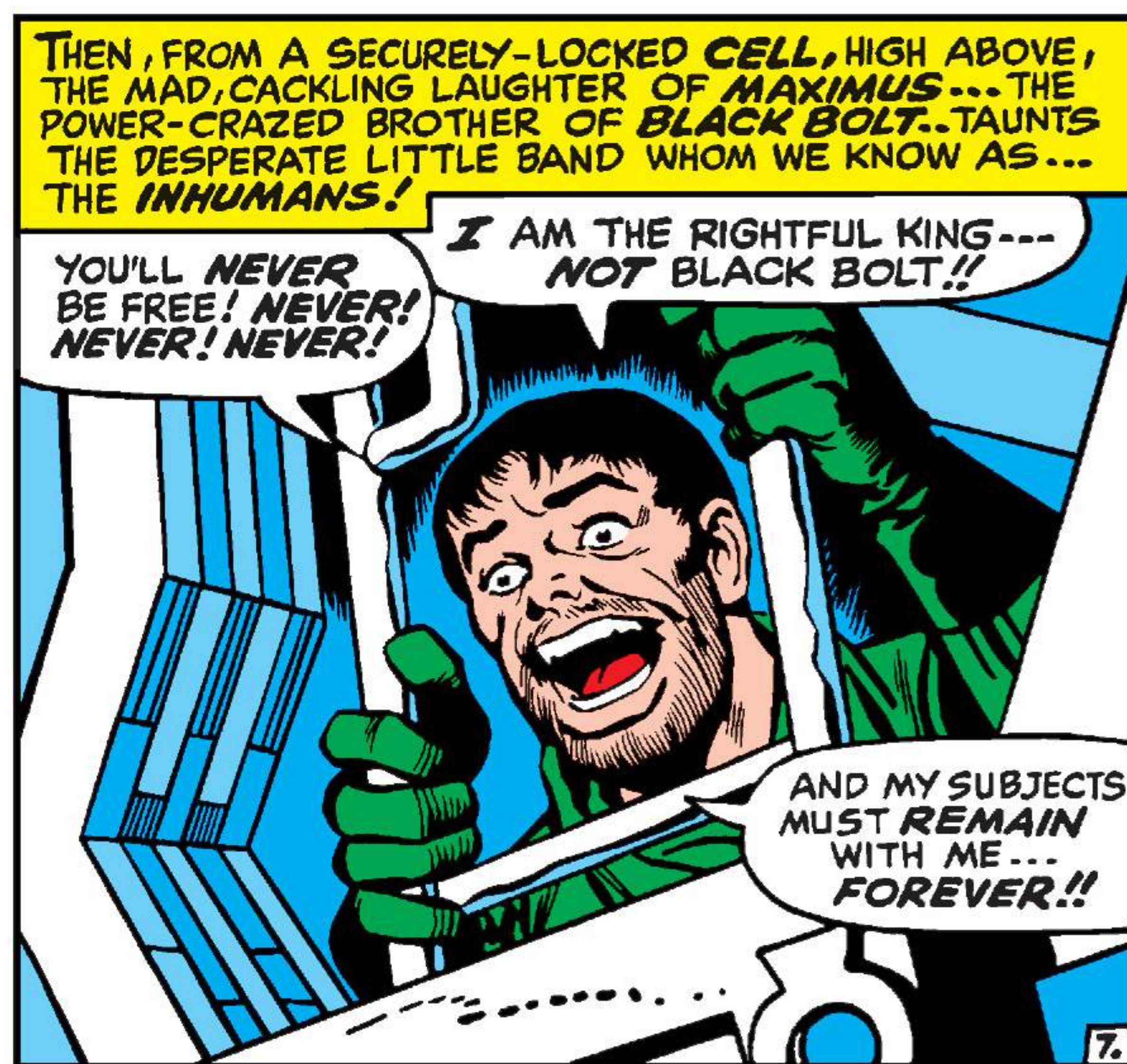
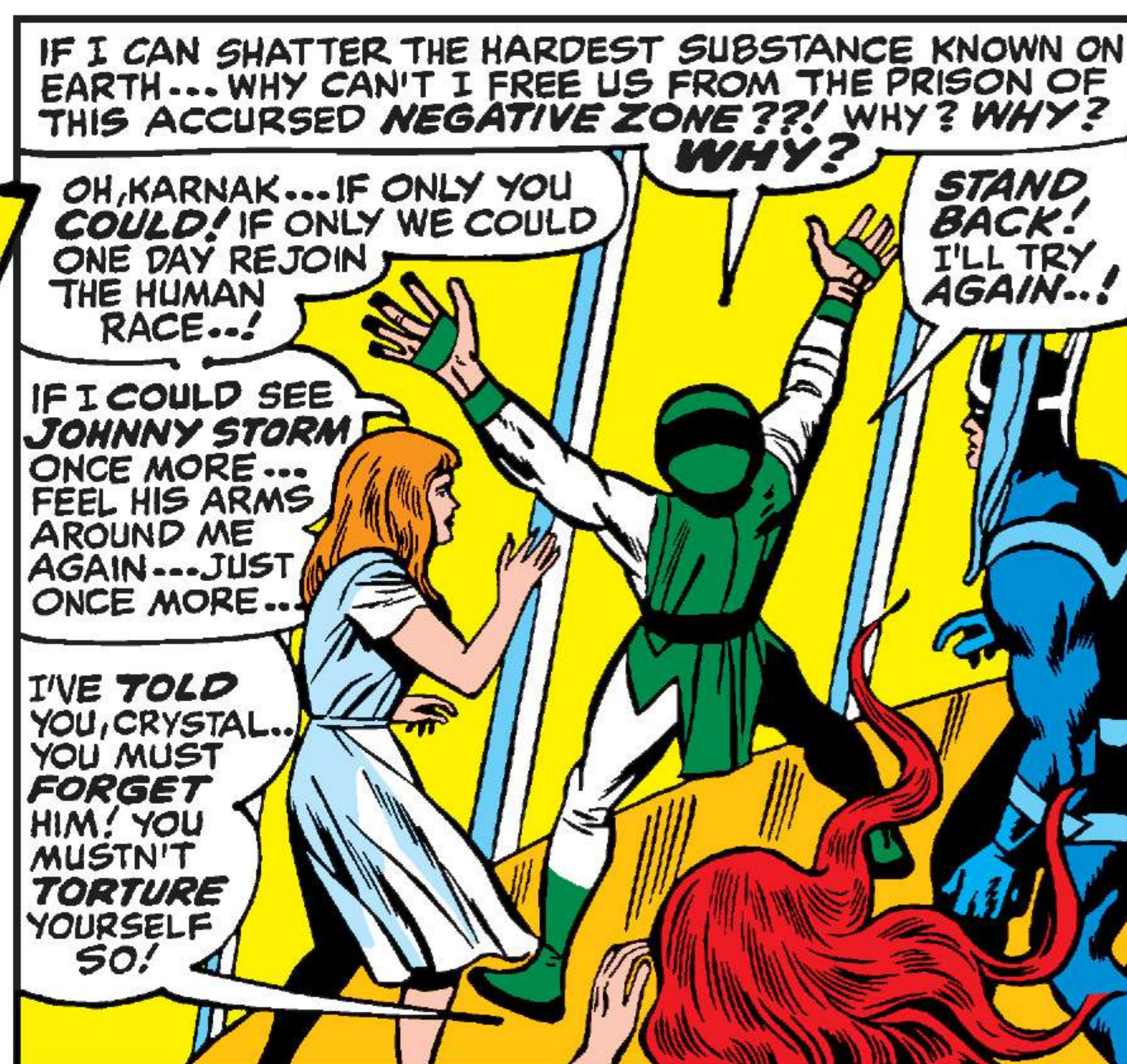
HIYA, JOE COLLEGE! WHAT'S THE GOOD WORD, LITTLE ITTY BITTY BUDDY?

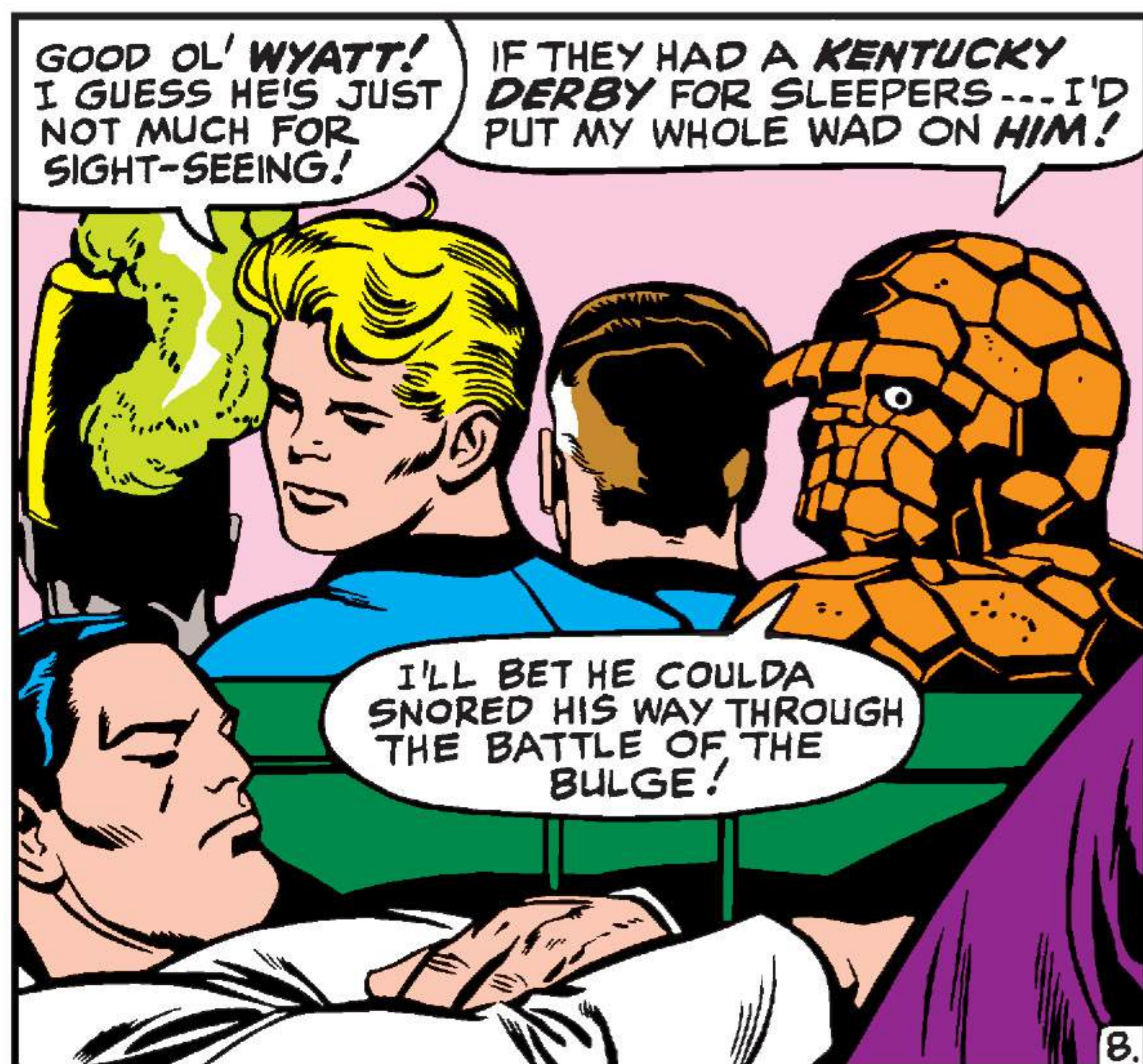
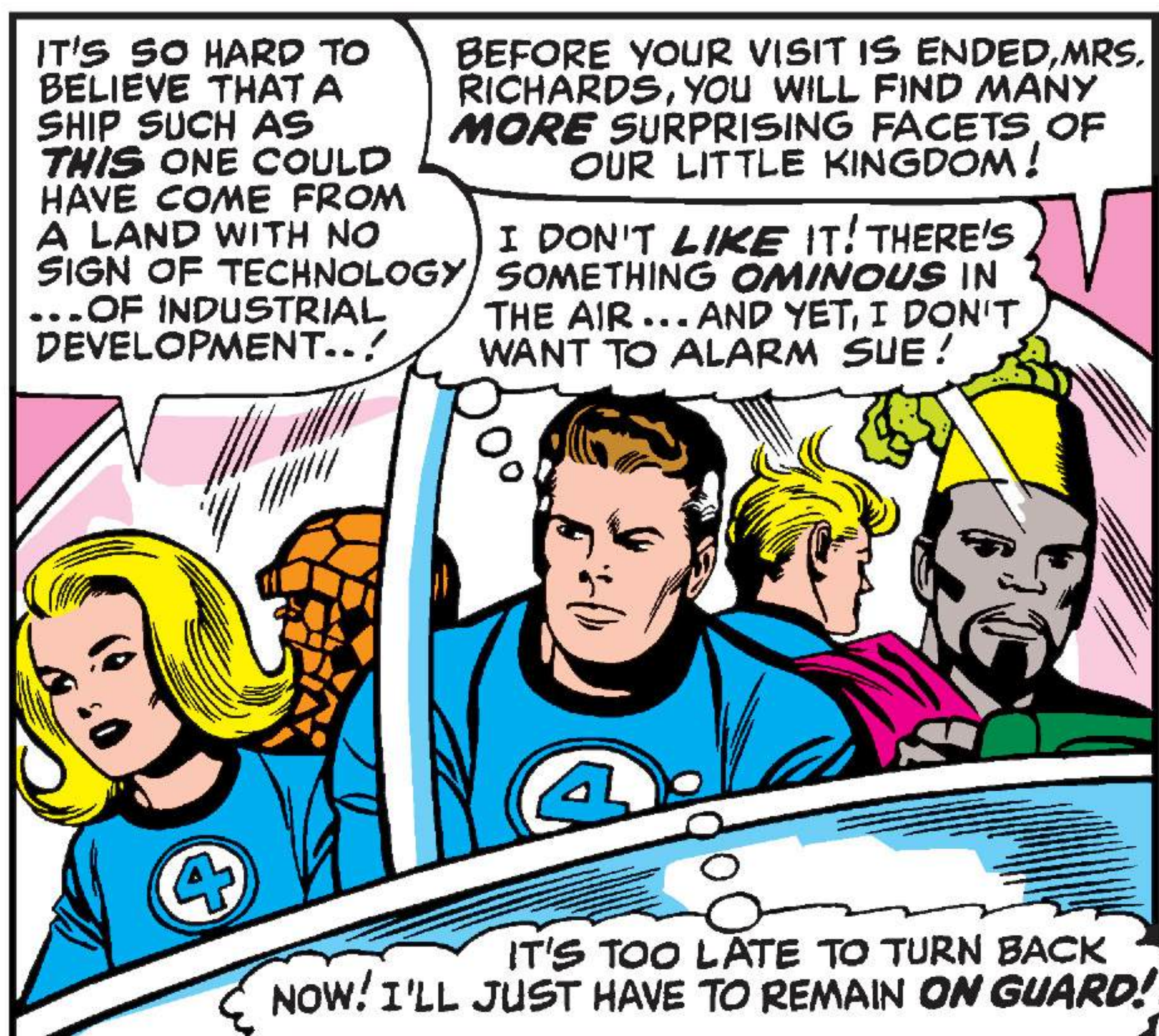
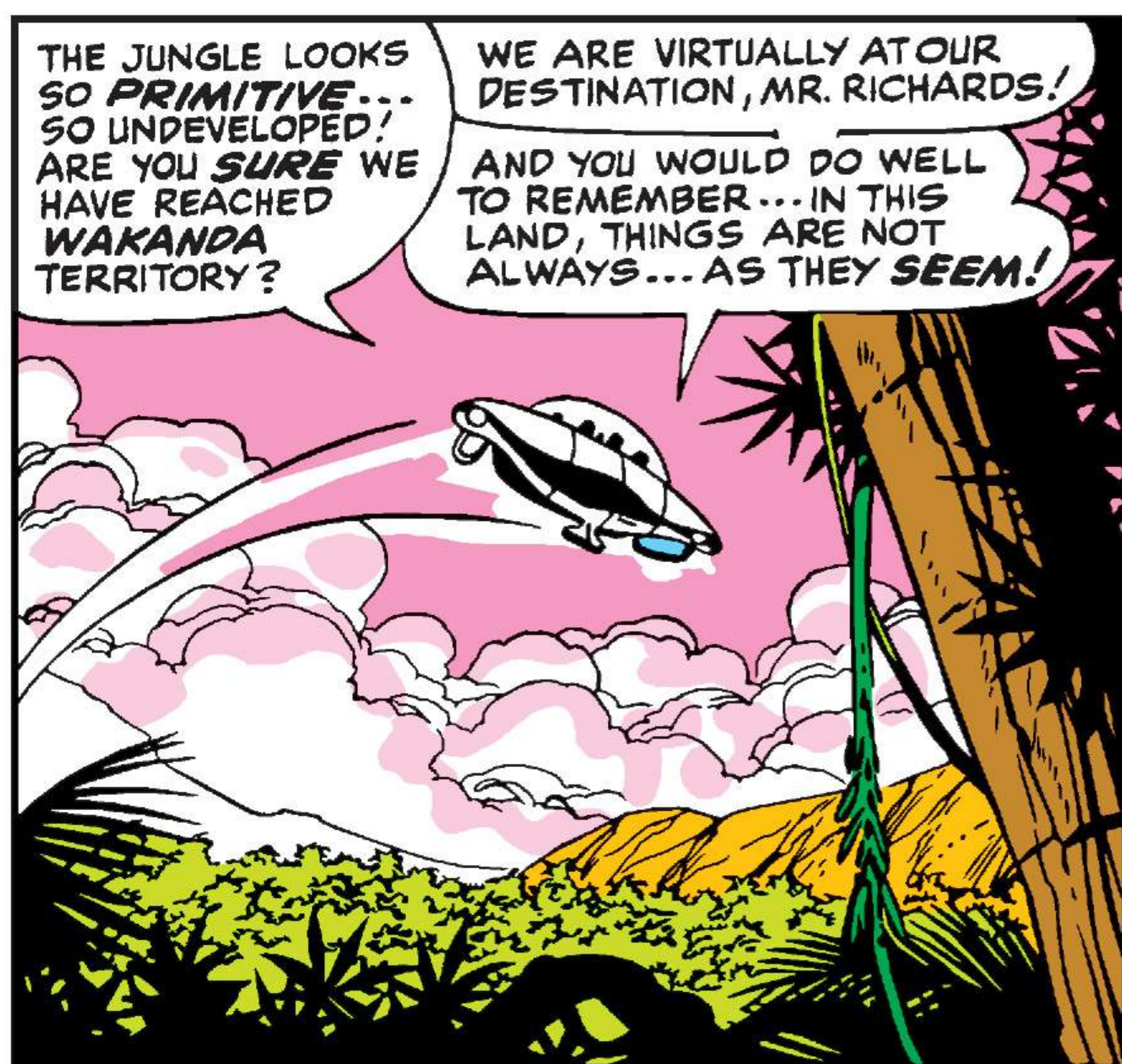
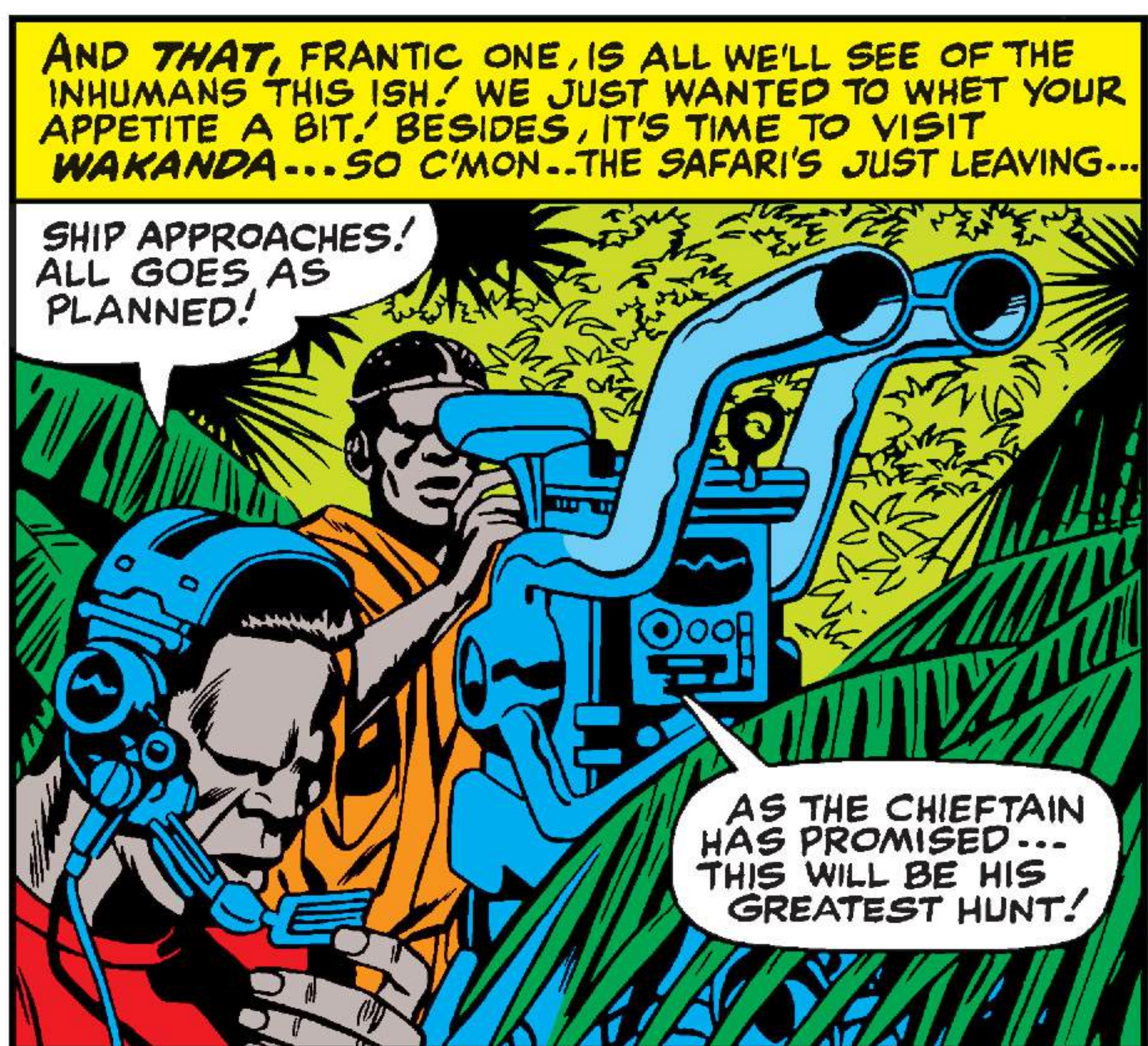
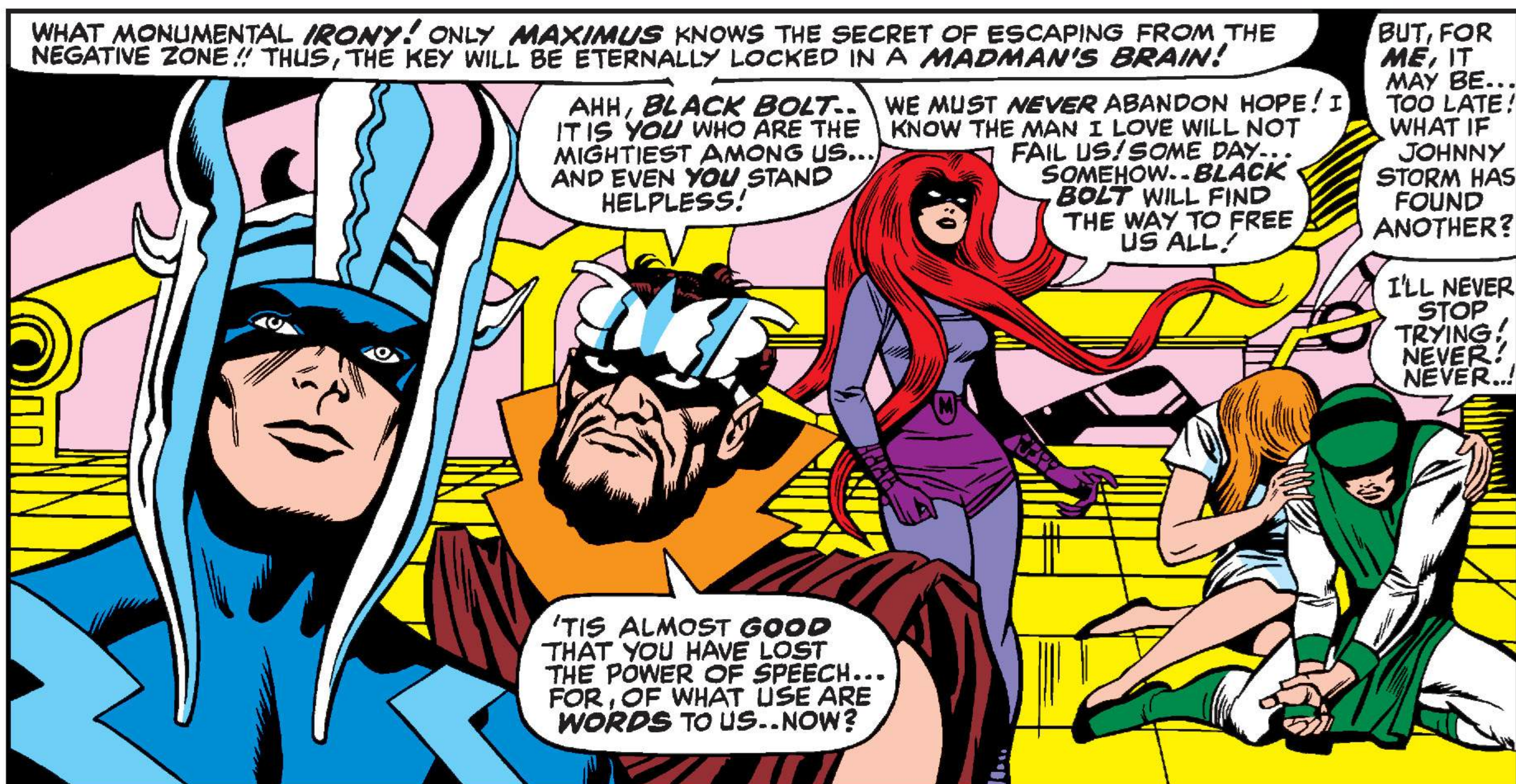
I'LL ITTY BITTY BUDDY YOU, YOU BLUE-EYED BIRDBRAIN!!

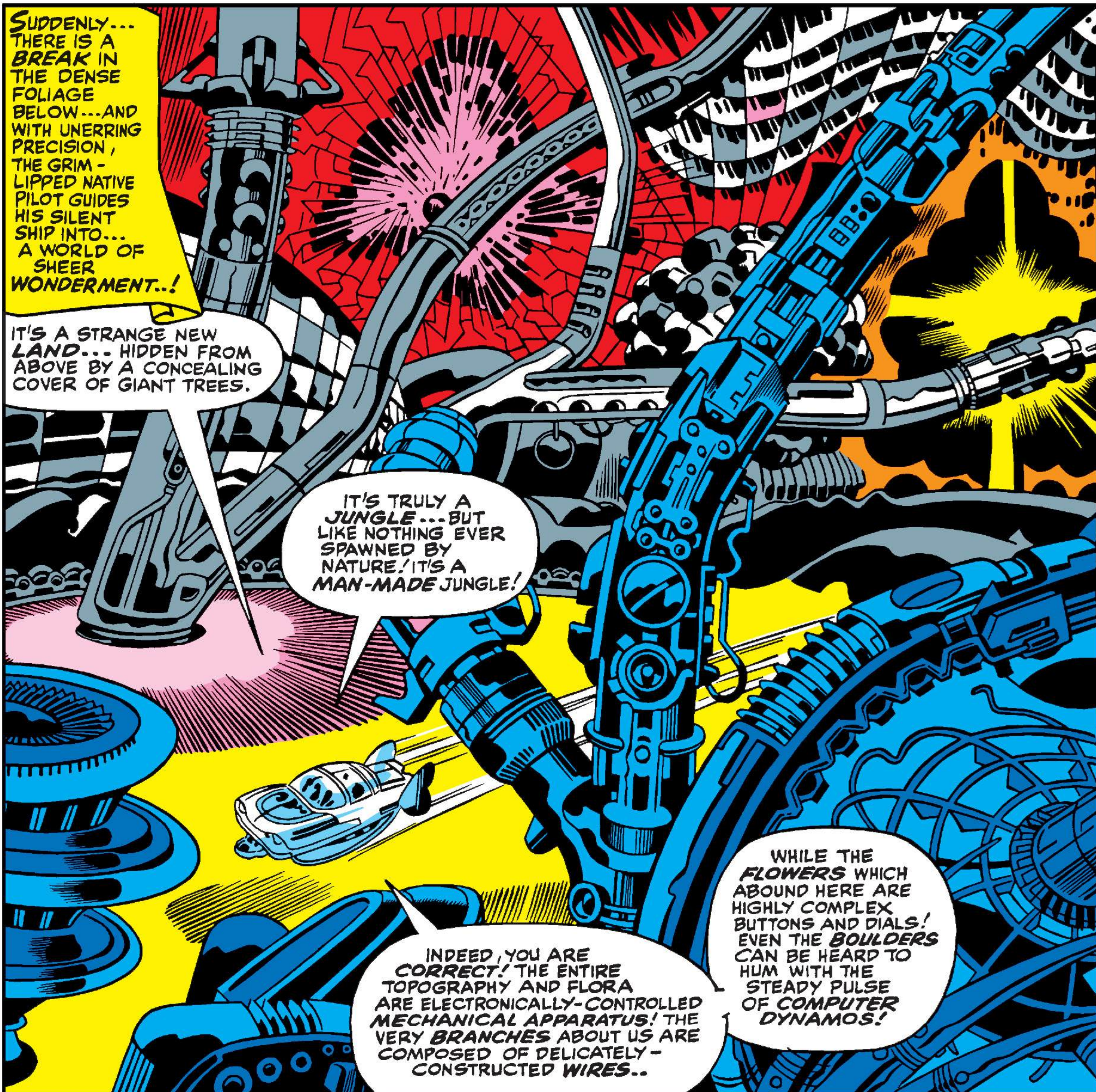
I **KNOWED** YA'D BE AS GOOD-NATURED AS EVER, JUNIOR!

LEGGO, BEFORE I GIVE YOU A HOT-FOOT BETWEEN WHERE YOUR **EARS** OUGHTTA BE!









SUDDENLY... THERE IS A **BREAK** IN THE DENSE FOLIAGE BELOW... AND WITH UNERRING PRECISION, THE GRIM-LIPPED NATIVE PILOT GUIDES HIS SILENT SHIP INTO... A WORLD OF SHEER WONDERMENT..!

IT'S A STRANGE NEW **LAND**... HIDDEN FROM ABOVE BY A CONCEALING COVER OF GIANT TREES.

IT'S TRULY A **JUNGLE**... BUT LIKE NOTHING EVER SPAWNED BY NATURE! IT'S A **MAN-MADE JUNGLE!**

INDEED, YOU ARE **CORRECT!** THE ENTIRE TOPOGRAPHY AND FLORA ARE ELECTRONICALLY-CONTROLLED **MECHANICAL APPARATUS!** THE VERY **BRANCHES** ABOUT US ARE COMPOSED OF DELICATELY-CONSTRUCTED **WIRES**..

WHILE THE **FLOWERS** WHICH ABOUND HERE ARE HIGHLY COMPLEX **BUTTONS AND DIALS!** EVEN THE **BOULDERS** CAN BE HEARD TO HUM WITH THE STEADY PULSE OF **COMPUTER DYNAMOS!**

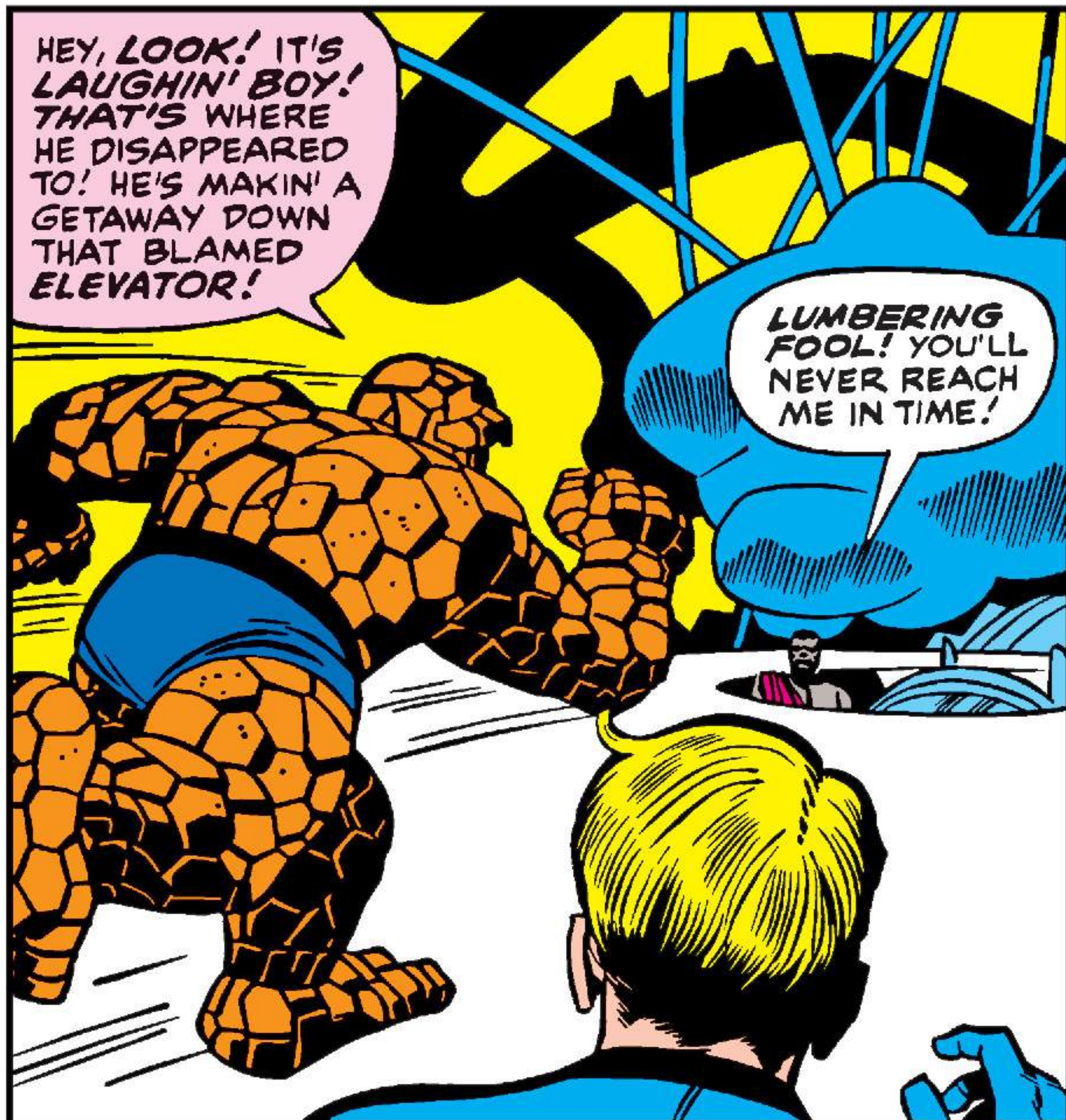
THEN, NO SOONER DOES THE AMAZING SHIP COME TO A VIBRATIONLESS HALT, THAN...

OUR **GUIDE!!** HE'S GONE! HE VANISHED BEHIND A NETWORK OF TUBES AND COILS!

STAY TOGETHER... ALL OF YOU! WHOEVER CREATED THIS ELECTRONIC NIGHTMARE HAS KEPT IT A **SECRET** FOR SOME **DEADLY REASON!**

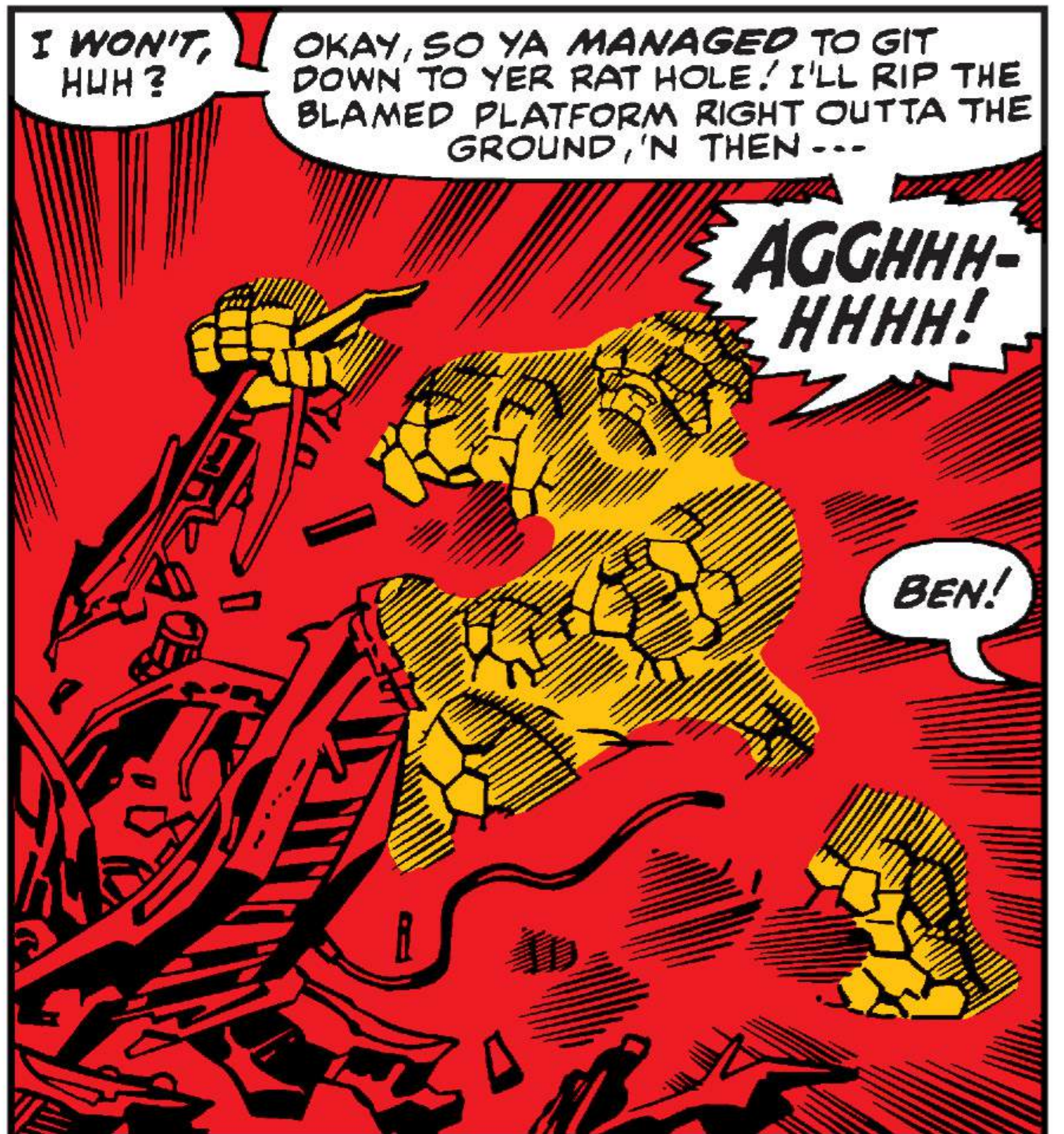
PHOOEY! IT'LL TAKE MORE'N A MESS'A CHROME-PLATED NUTS 'N BOLTS TO SCARE ME!





HEY, LOOK! IT'S LAUGHIN' BOY! THAT'S WHERE HE DISAPPEARED TO! HE'S MAKIN' A GETAWAY DOWN THAT BLAMED ELEVATOR!

LUMBERING FOOL! YOU'LL NEVER REACH ME IN TIME!

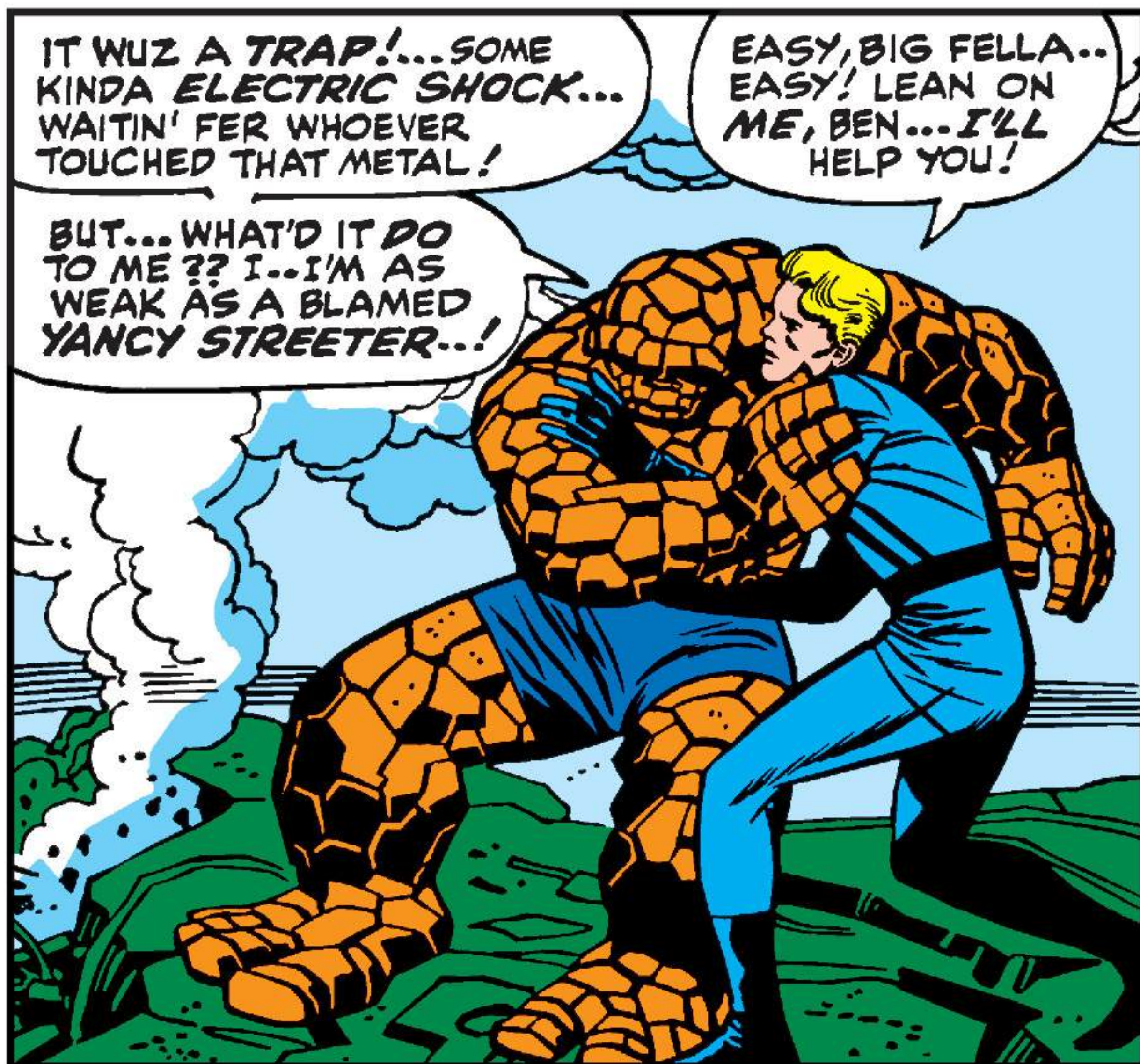


I WON'T, HUH?

OKAY, SO YA MANAGED TO GIT DOWN TO YER RAT HOLE! I'LL RIP THE BLAMED PLATFORM RIGHT OUTTA THE GROUND, 'N THEN ---

AGGHHH-HHHH!

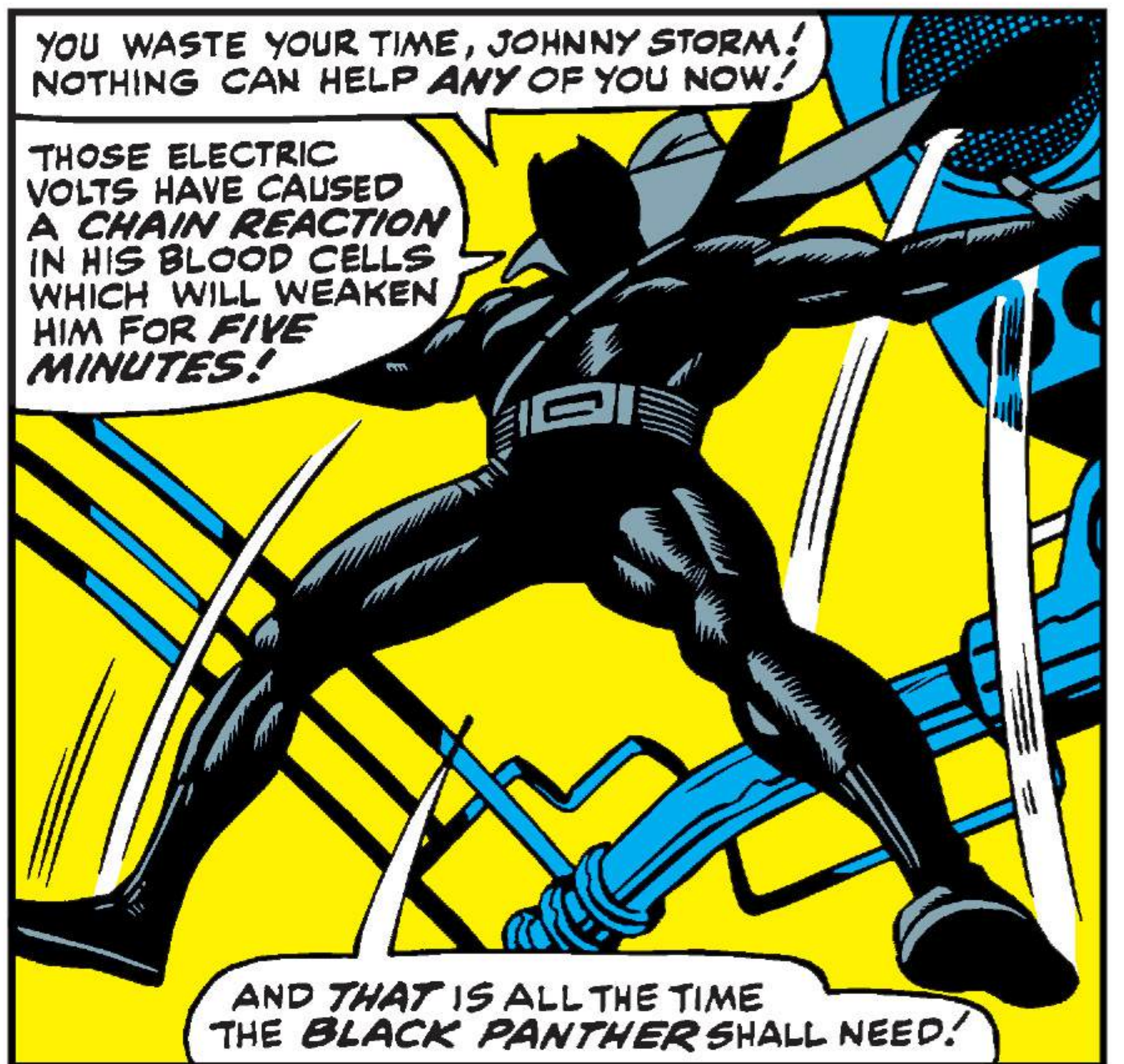
BEN!



IT WUZ A TRAP!...SOME KINDA ELECTRIC SHOCK... WAITIN' FER WHOEVER TOUCHED THAT METAL!

EASY, BIG FELLA... EASY! LEAN ON ME, BEN... I'LL HELP YOU!

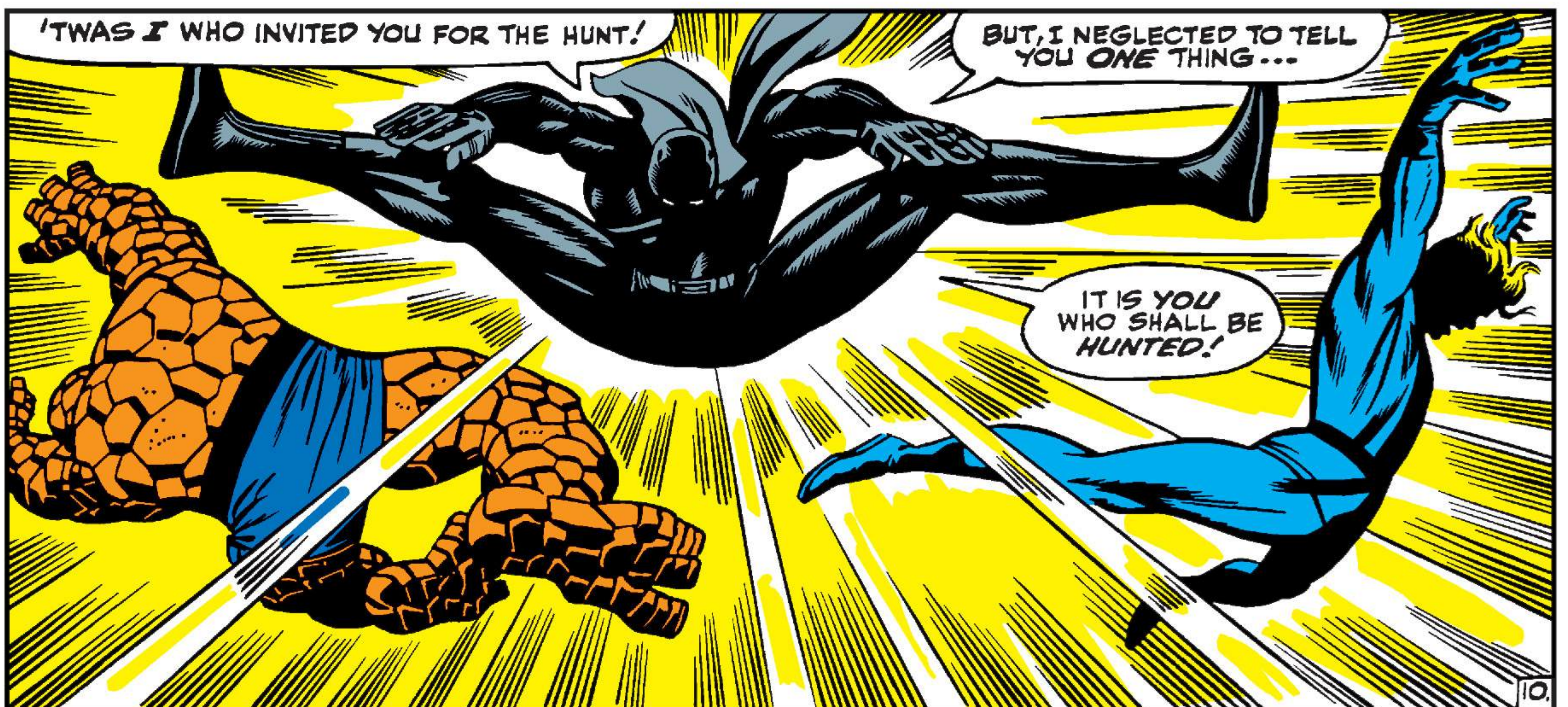
BUT... WHAT'D IT DO TO ME ?? I..I'M AS WEAK AS A BLAMED YANCY STREETER...!



YOU WASTE YOUR TIME, JOHNNY STORM! NOTHING CAN HELP ANY OF YOU NOW!

THOSE ELECTRIC VOLTS HAVE CAUSED A CHAIN REACTION IN HIS BLOOD CELLS WHICH WILL WEAKEN HIM FOR FIVE MINUTES!

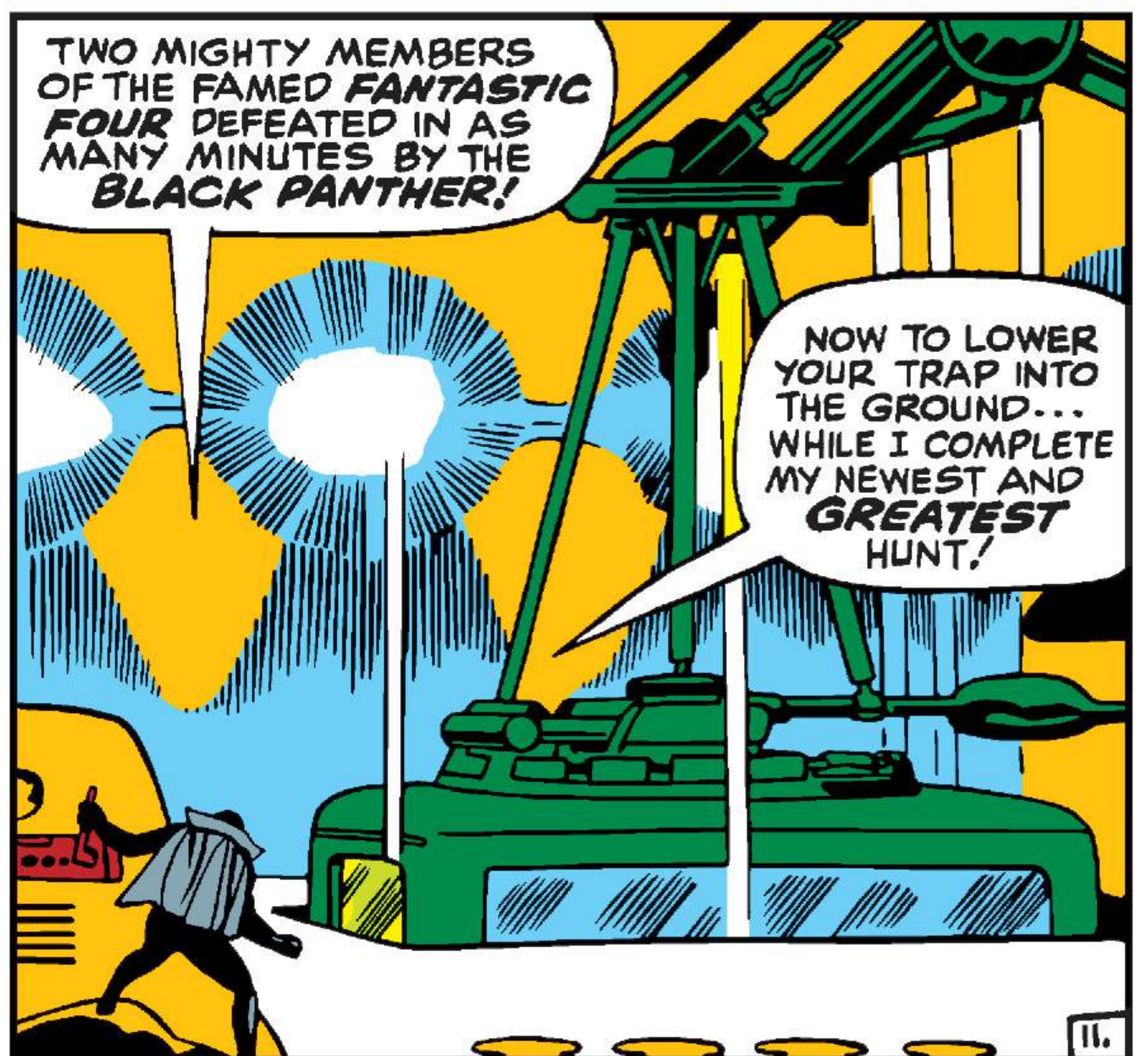
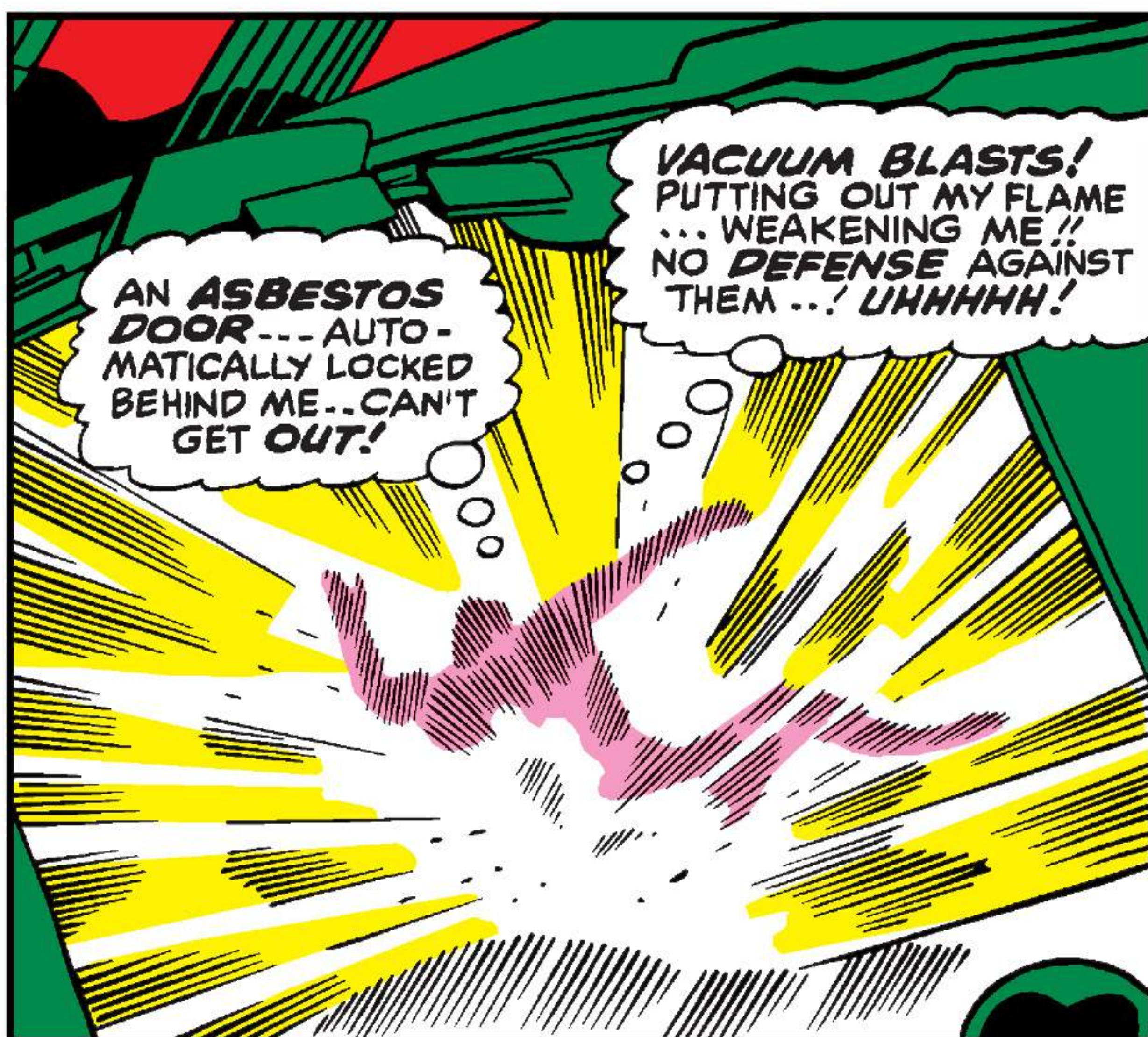
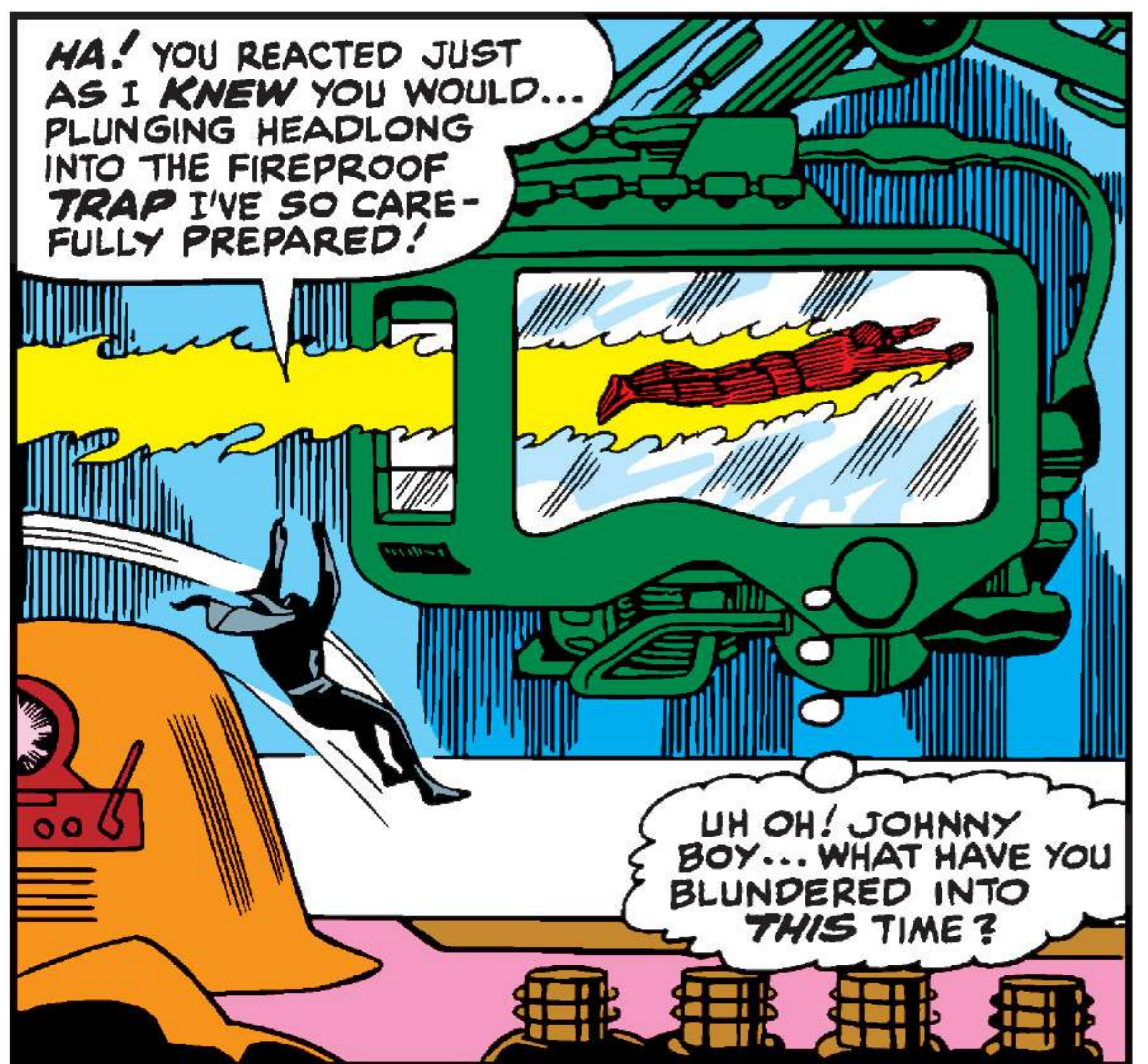
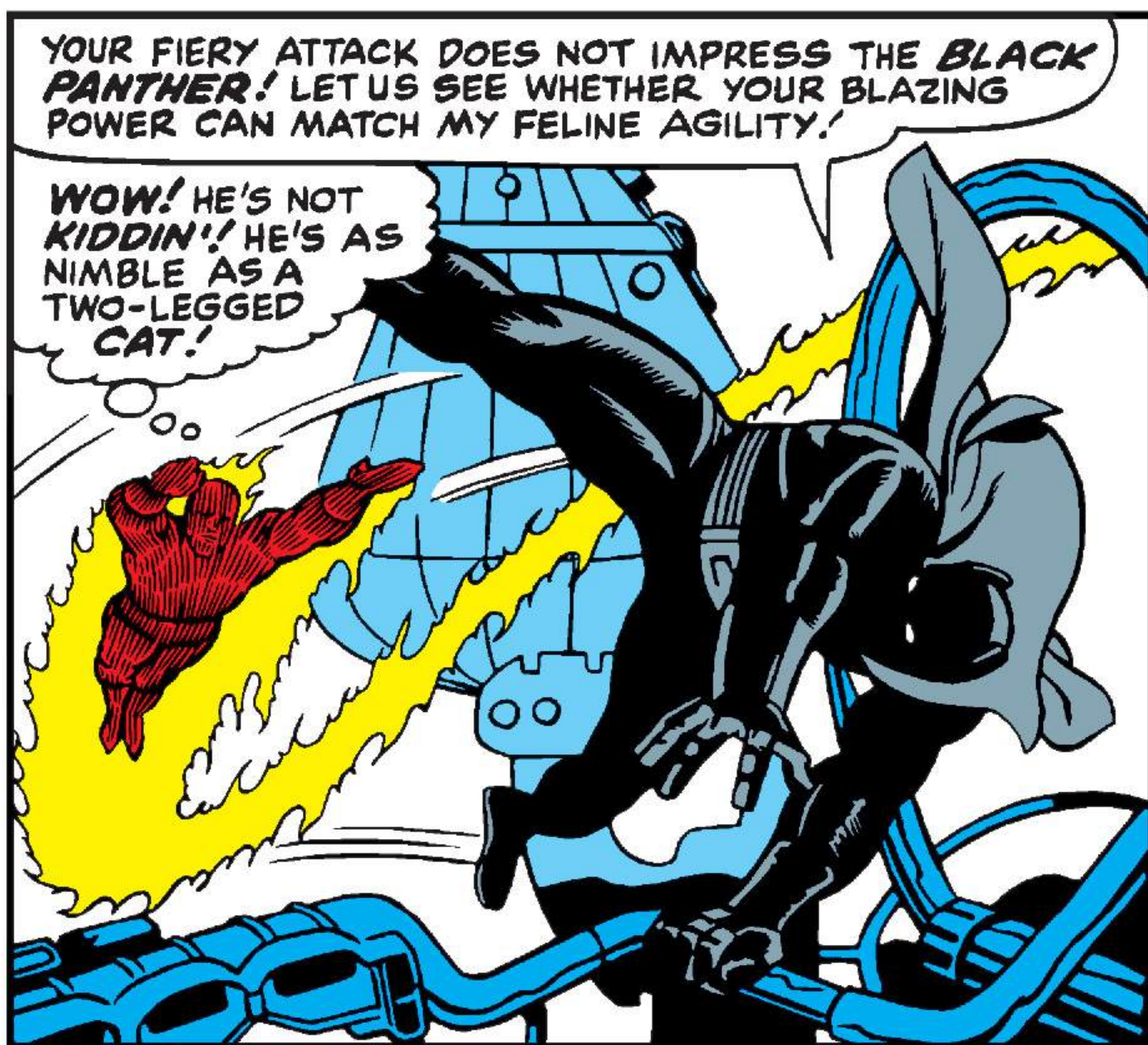
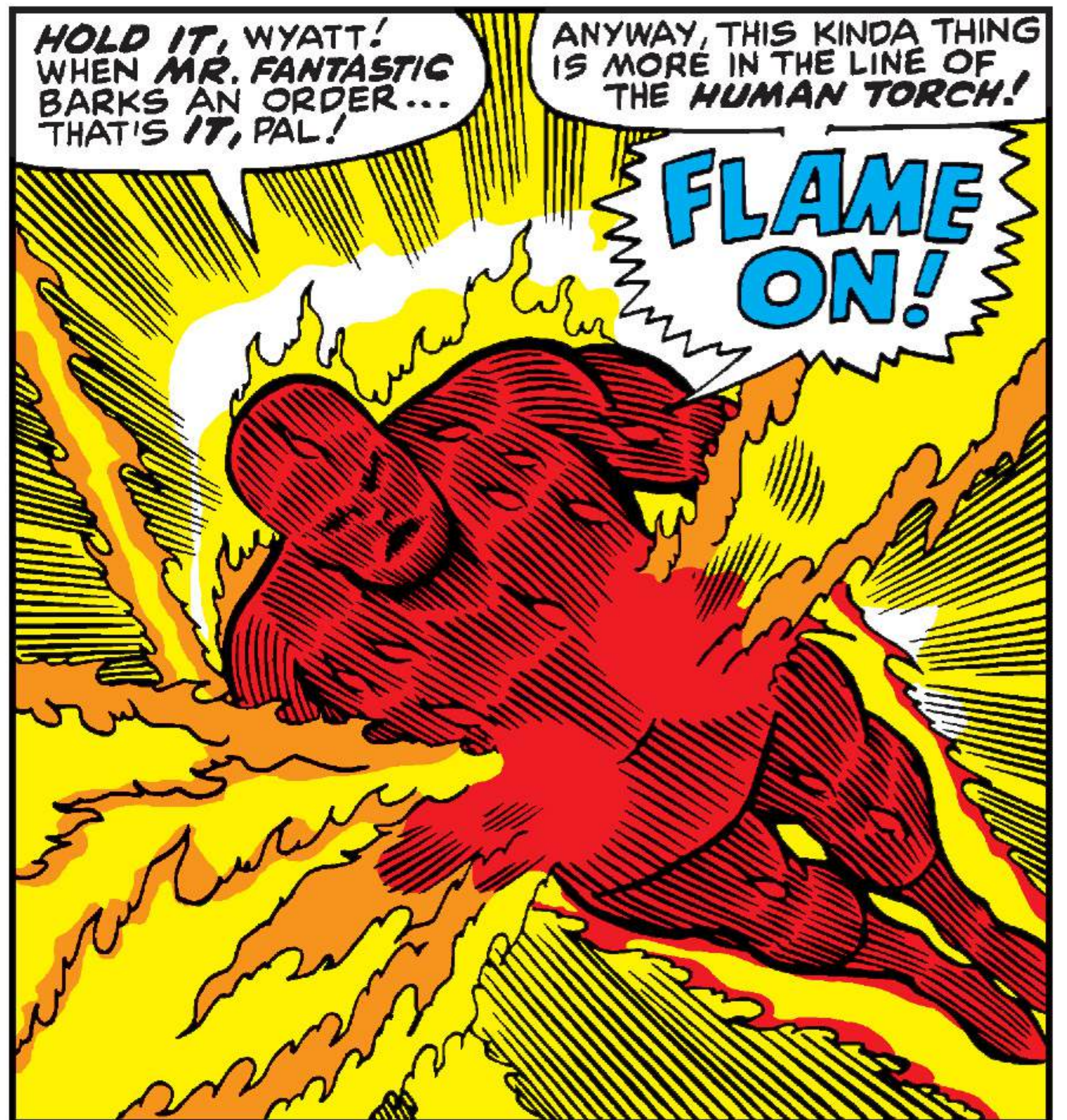
AND THAT IS ALL THE TIME THE BLACK PANTHER SHALL NEED!

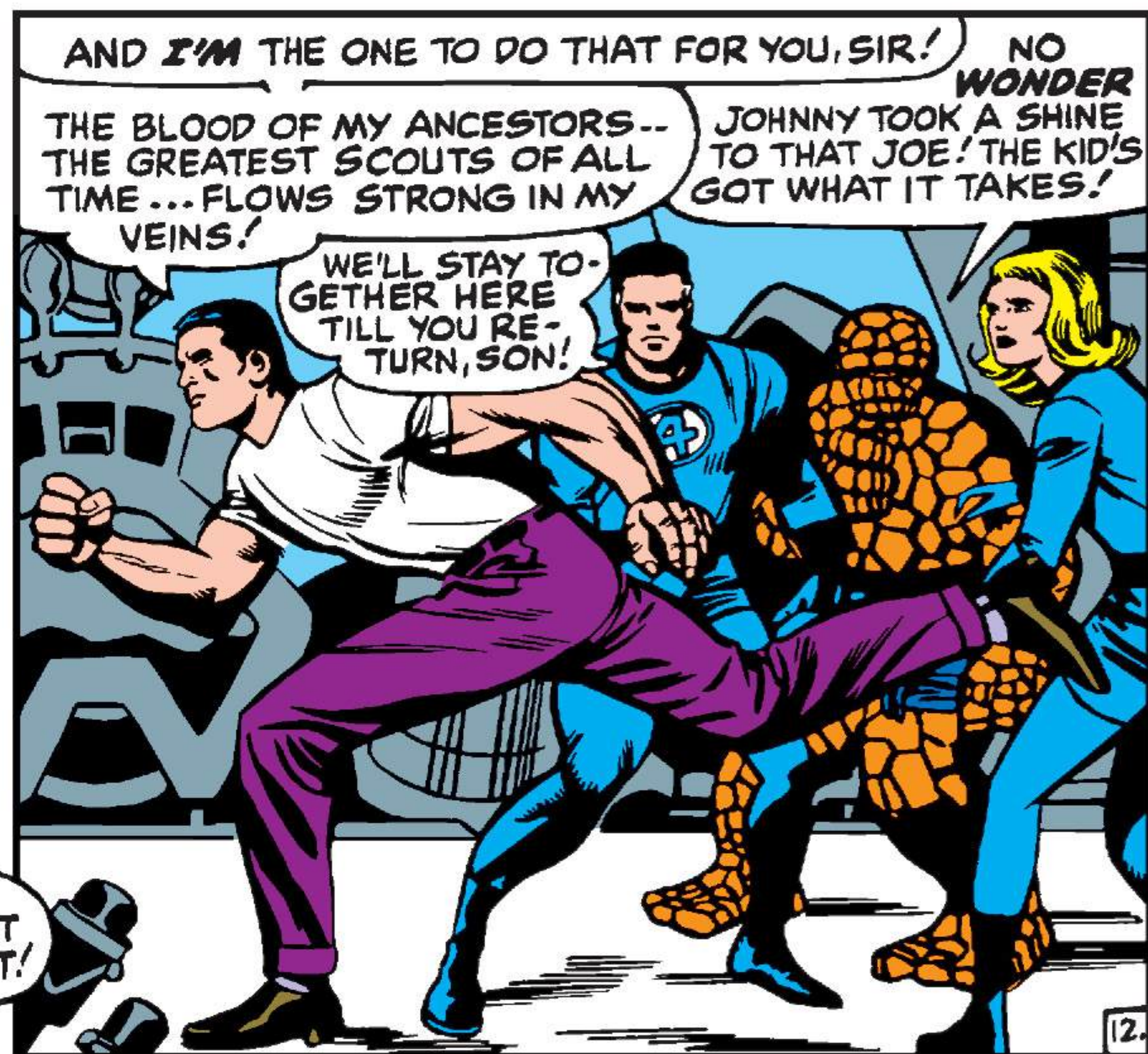
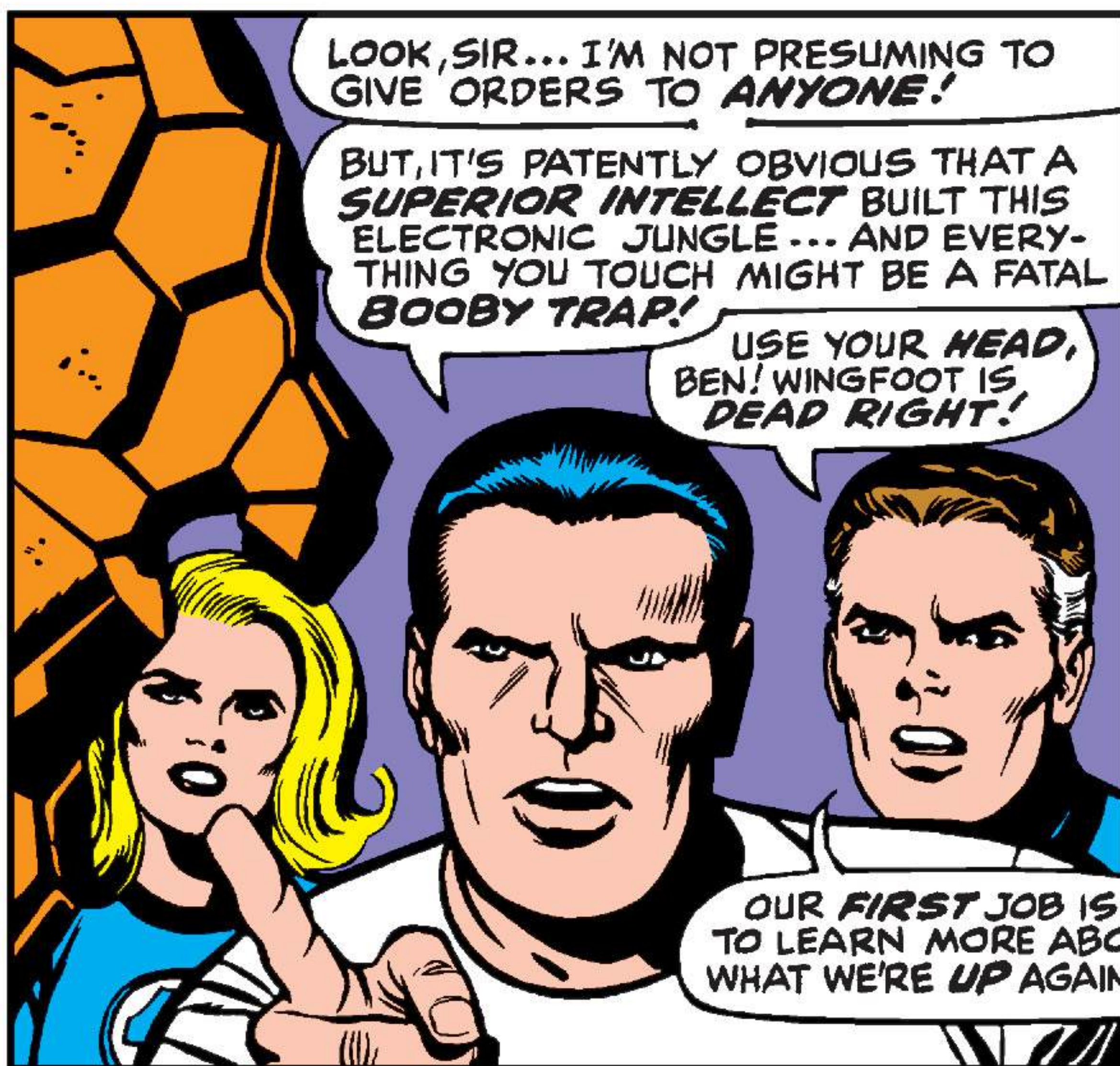
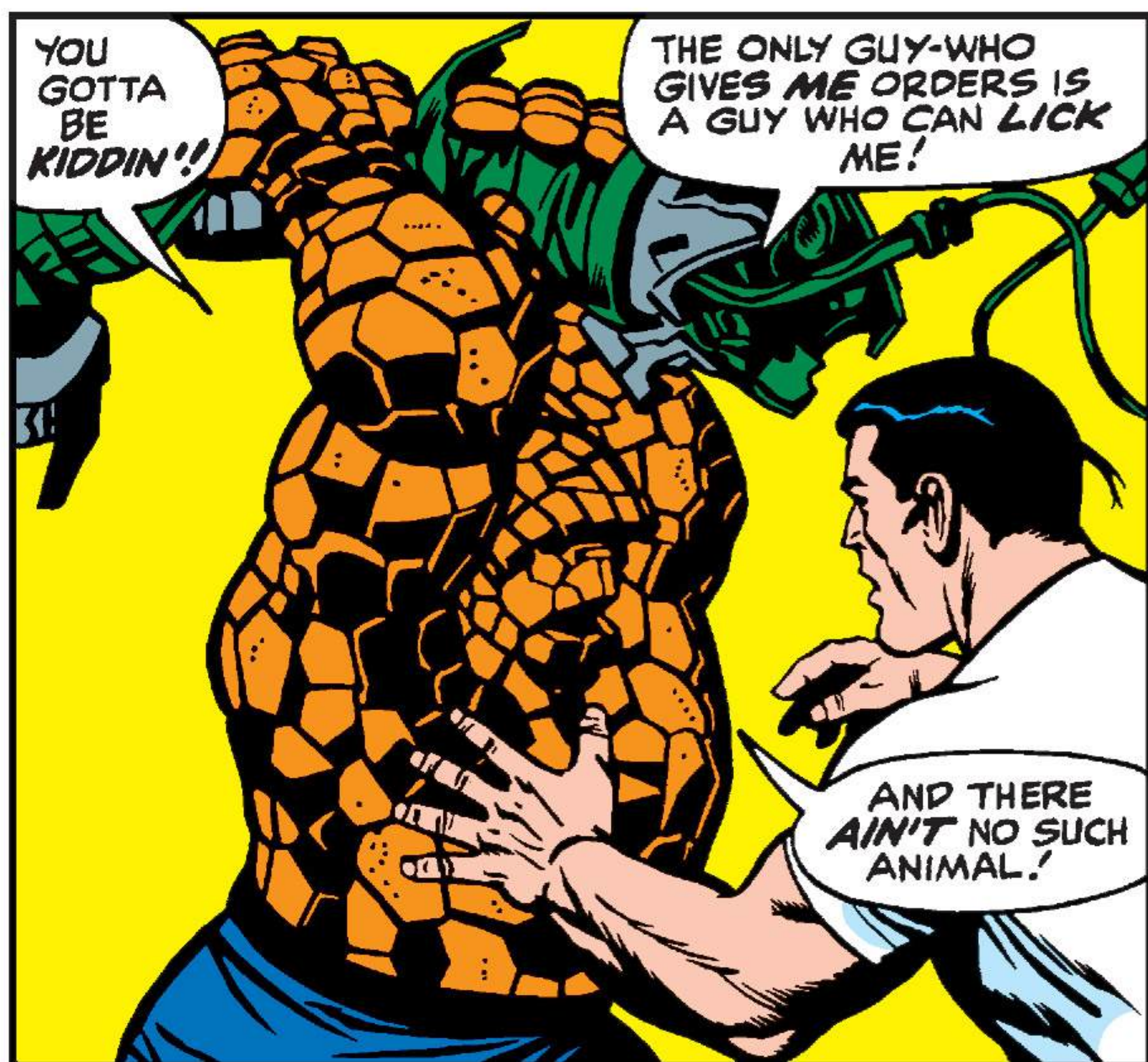
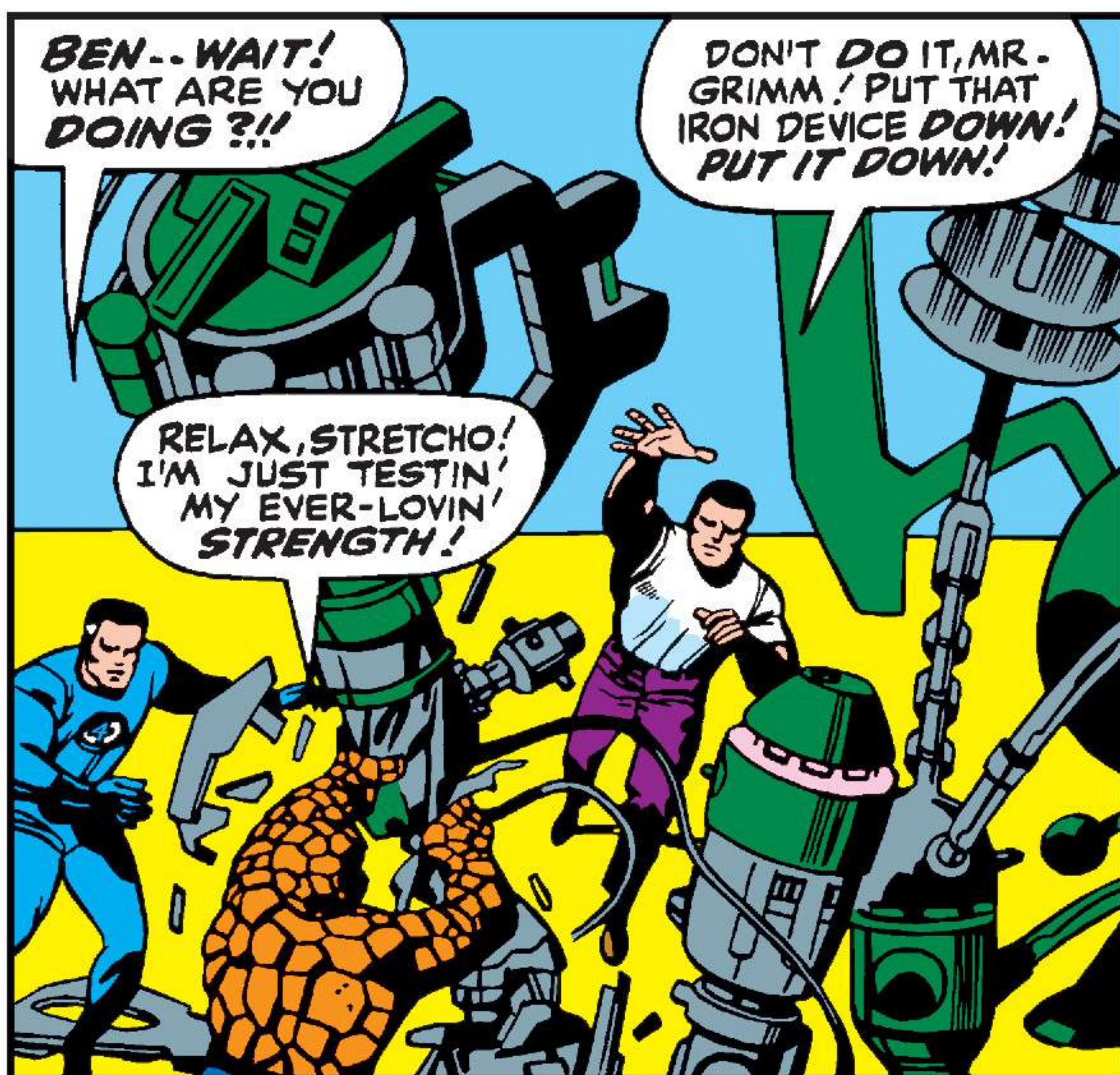
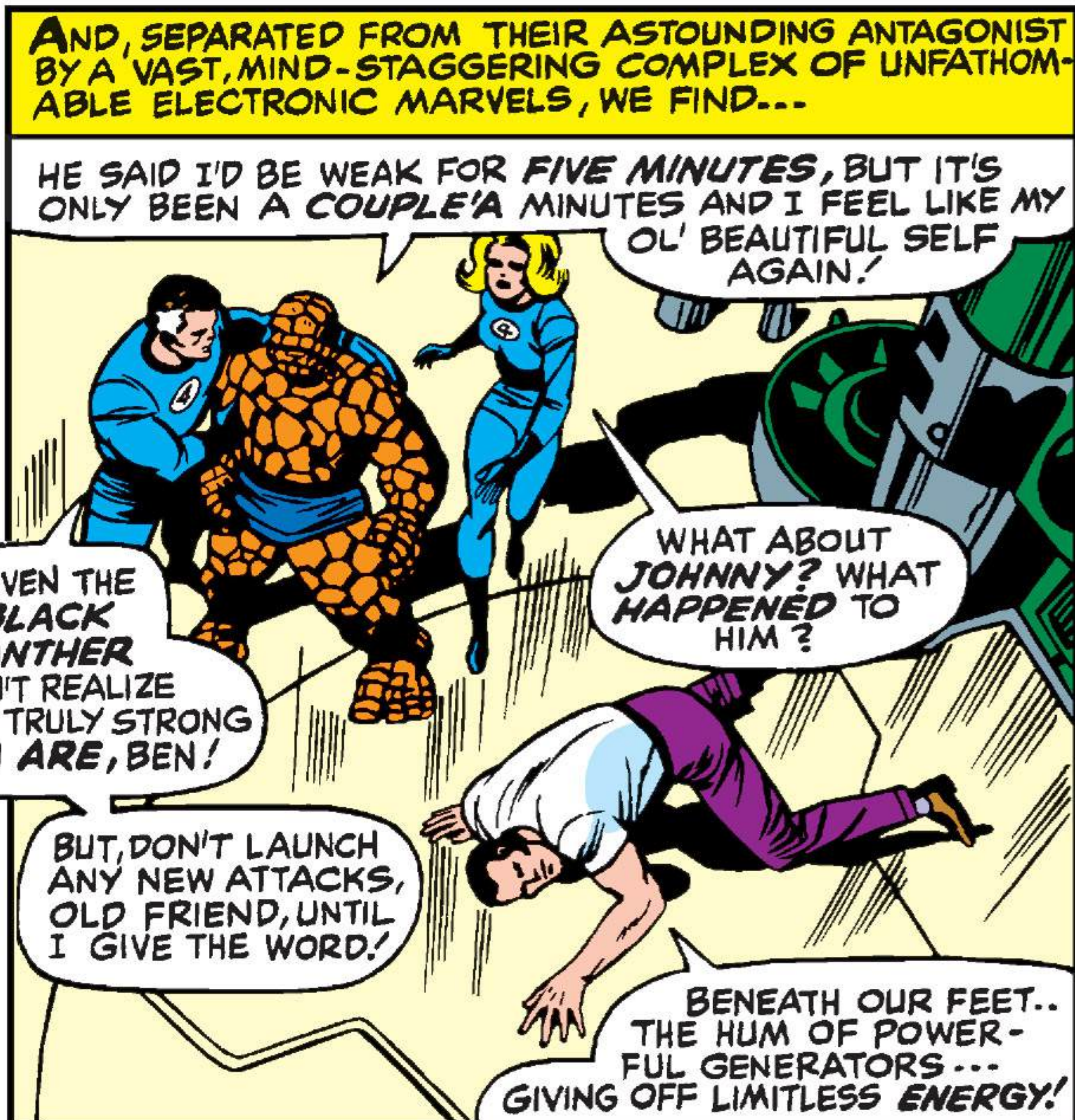


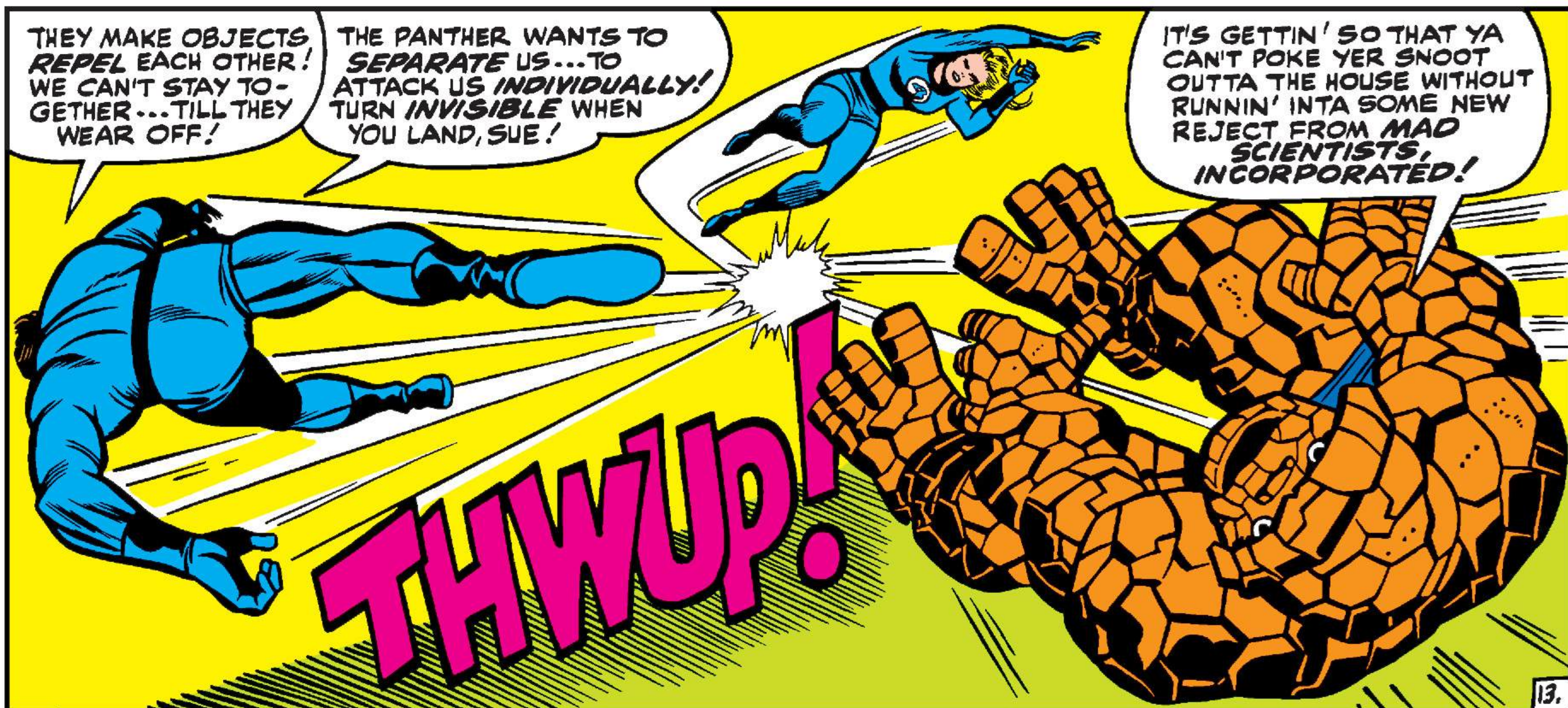
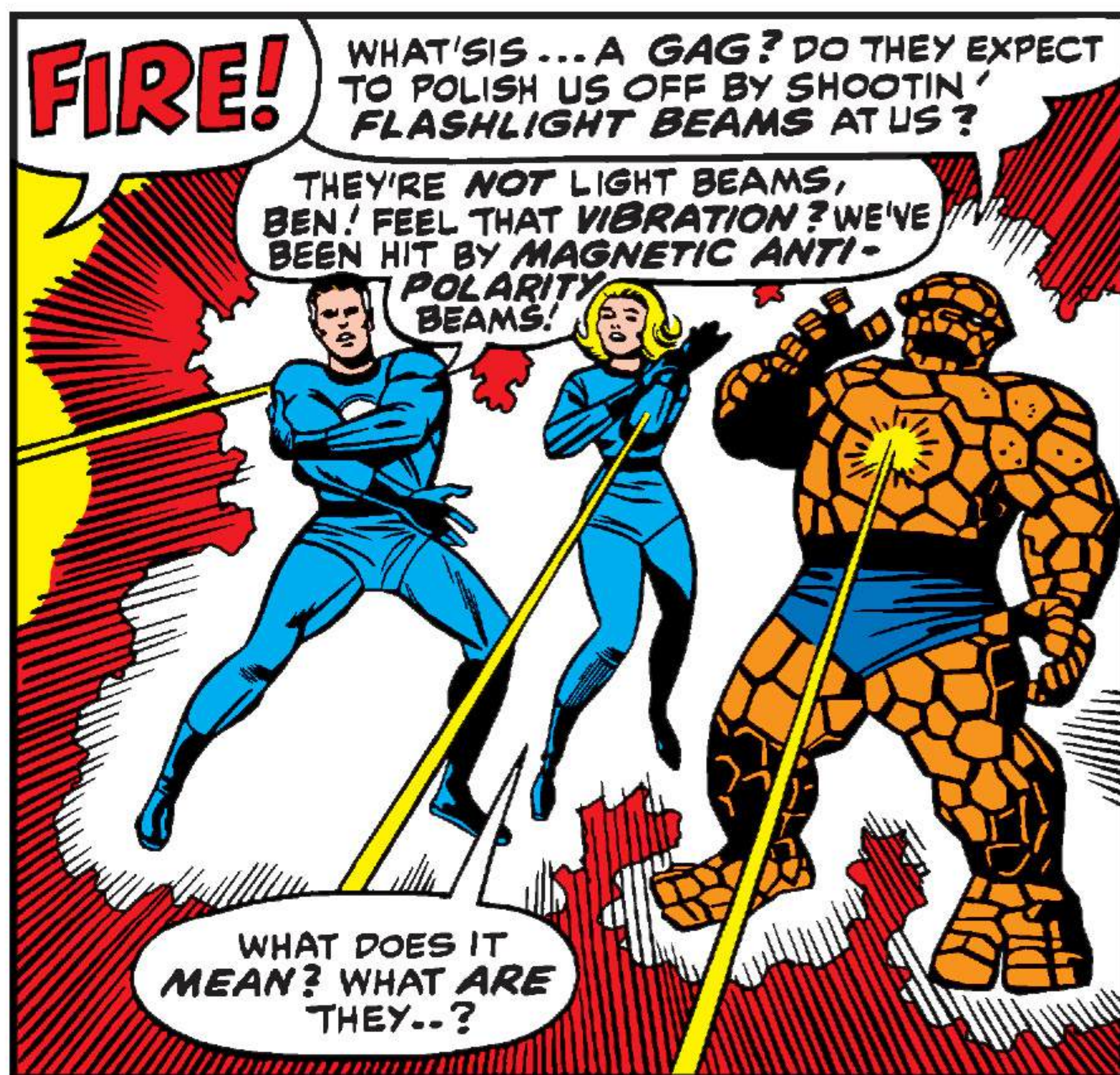
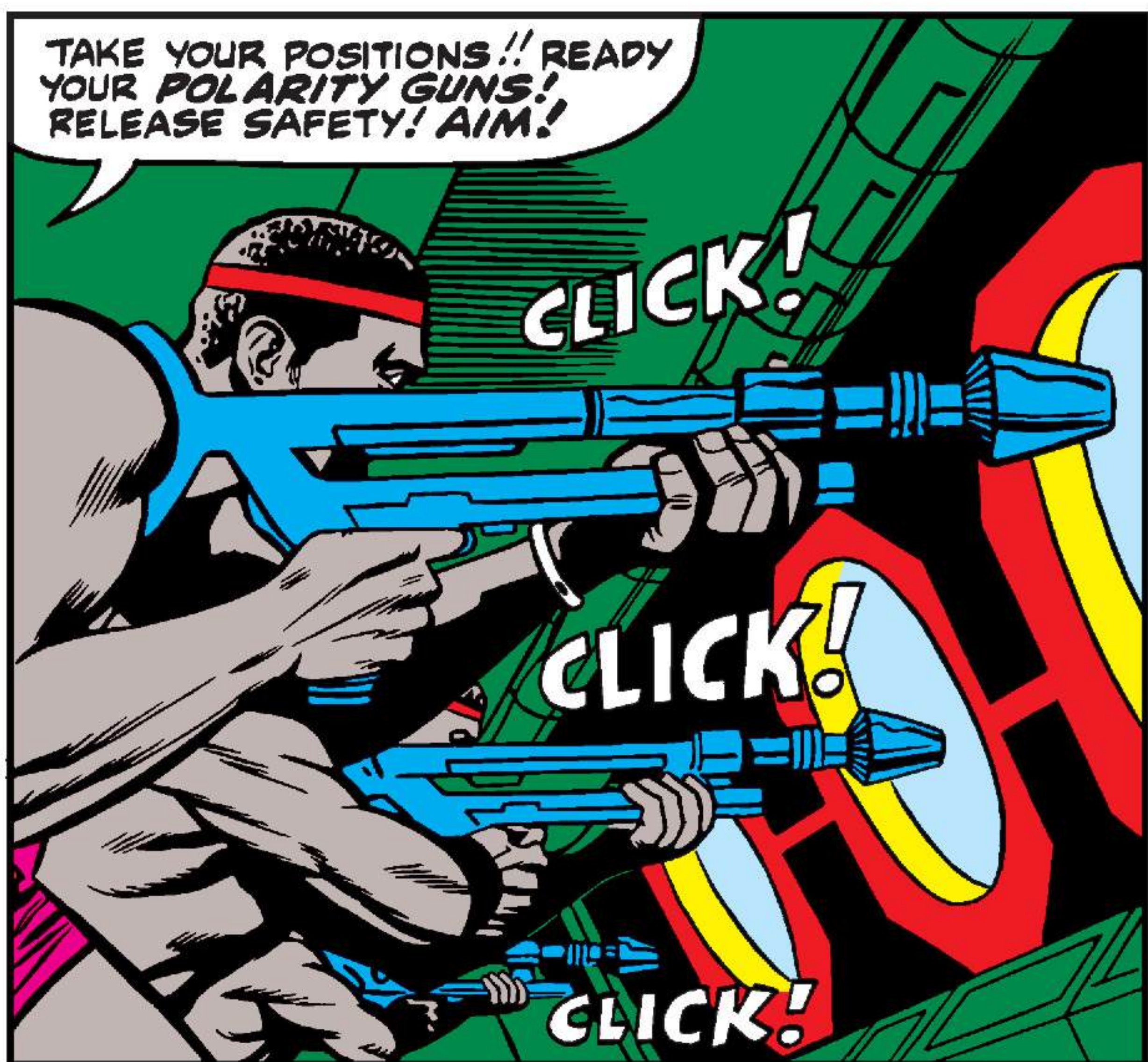
'TWAS I WHO INVITED YOU FOR THE HUNT!

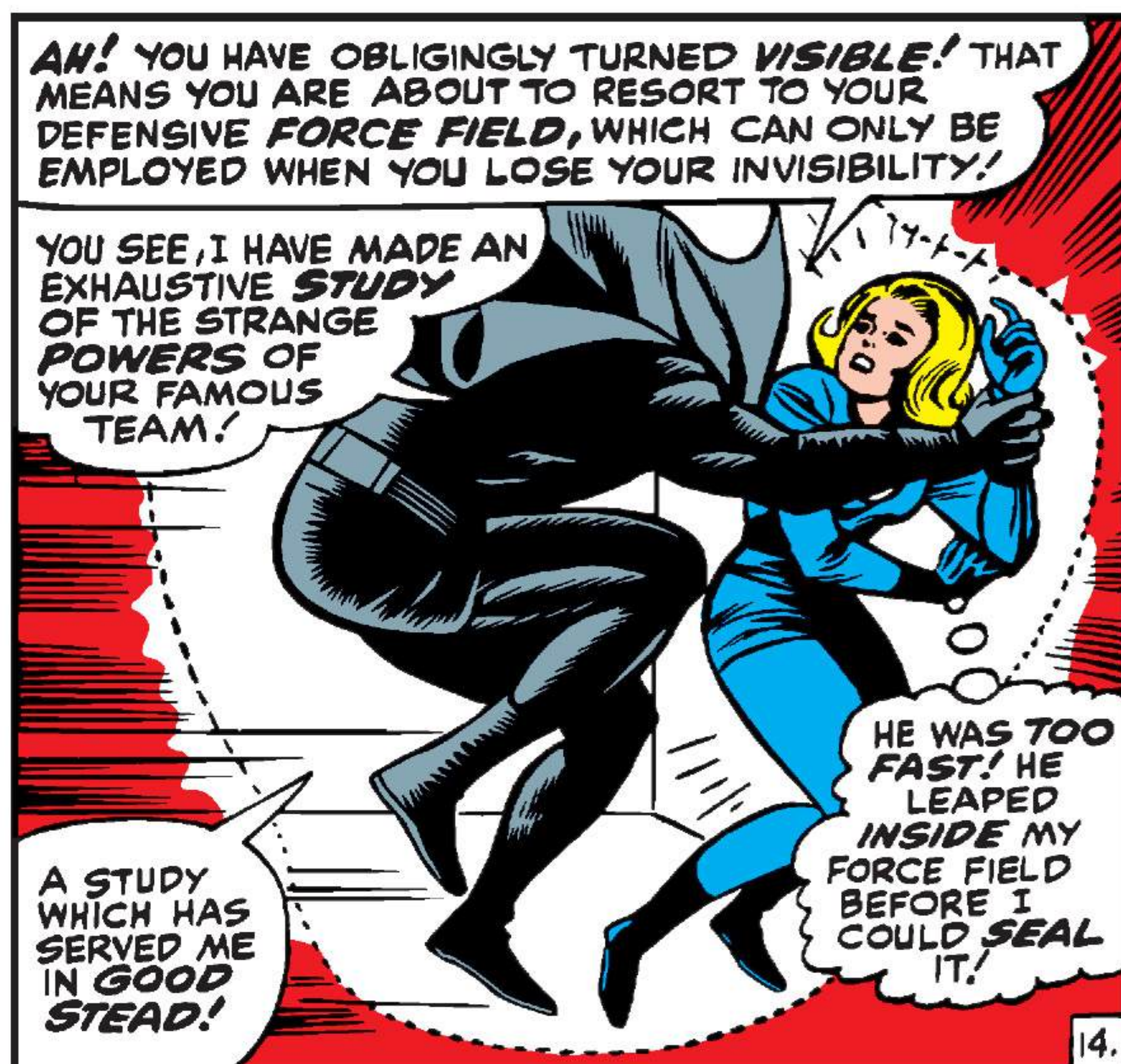
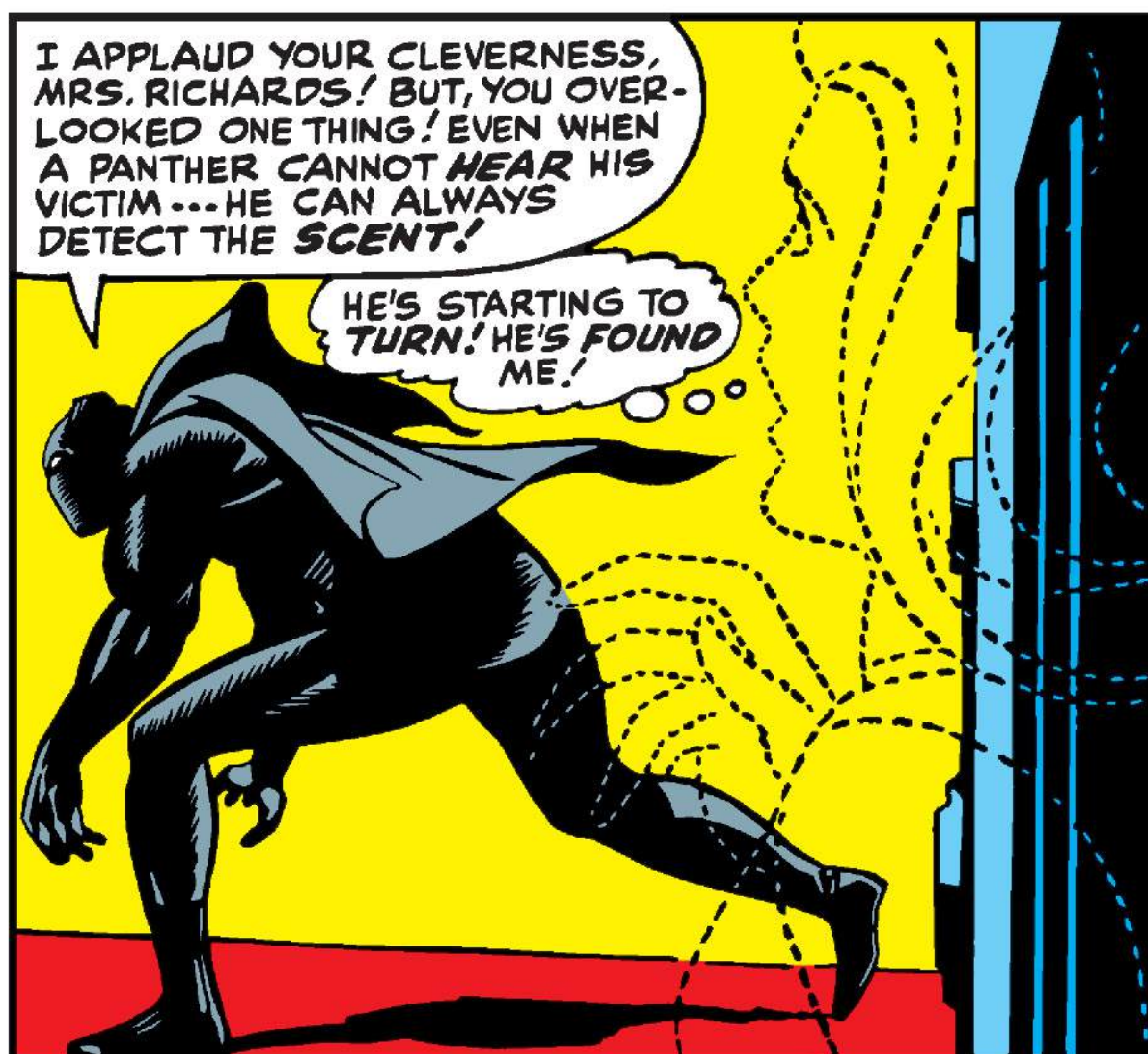
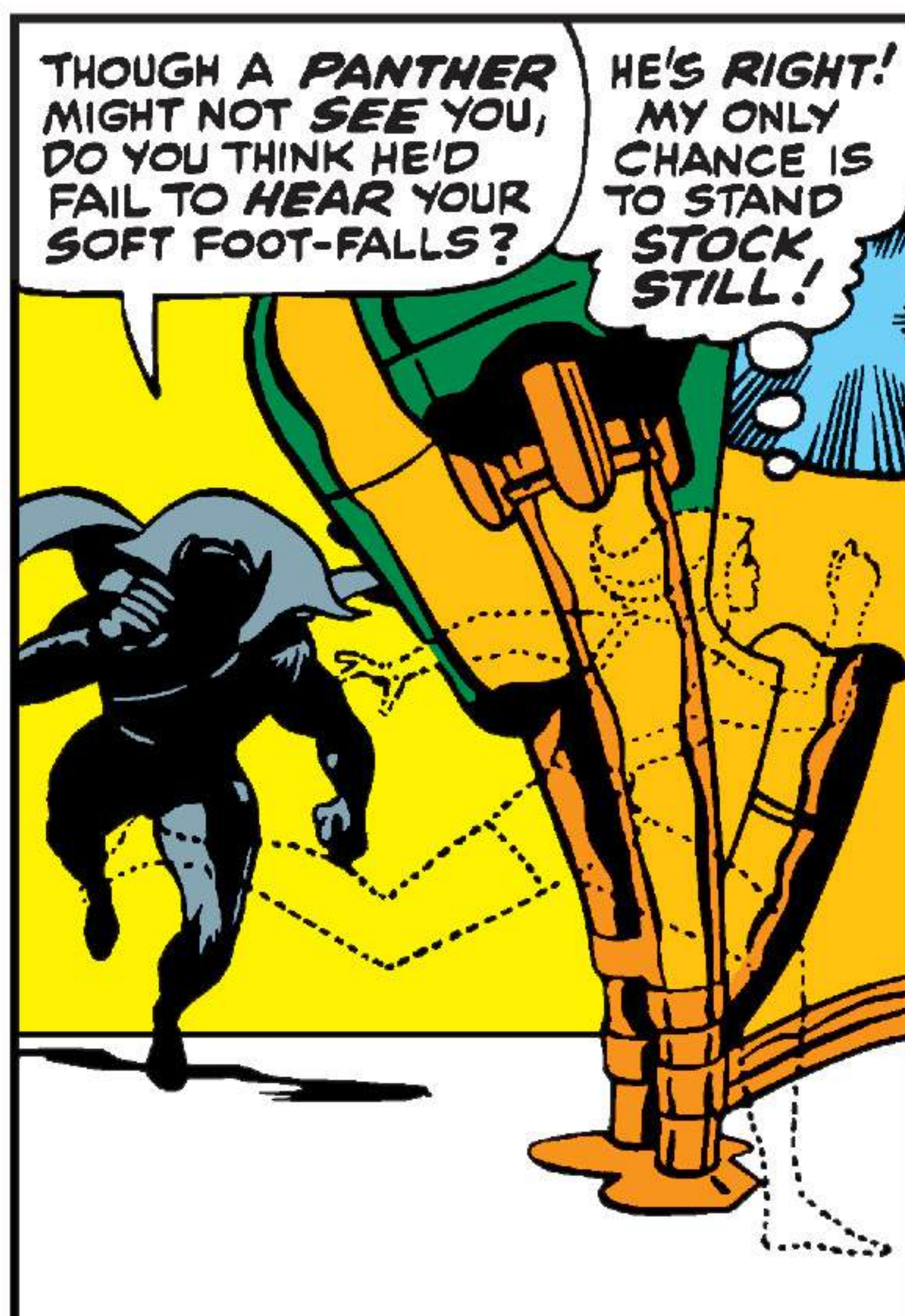
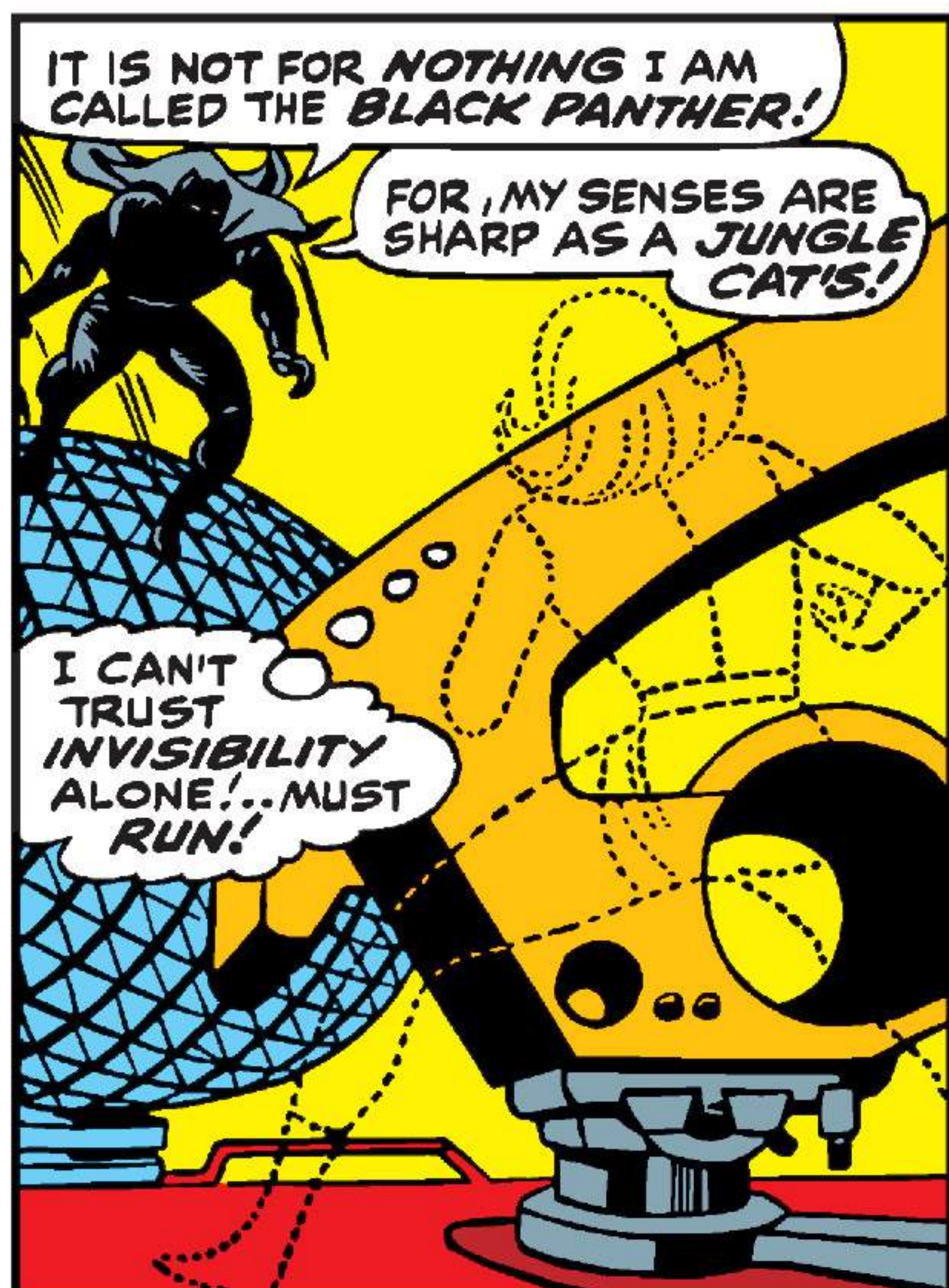
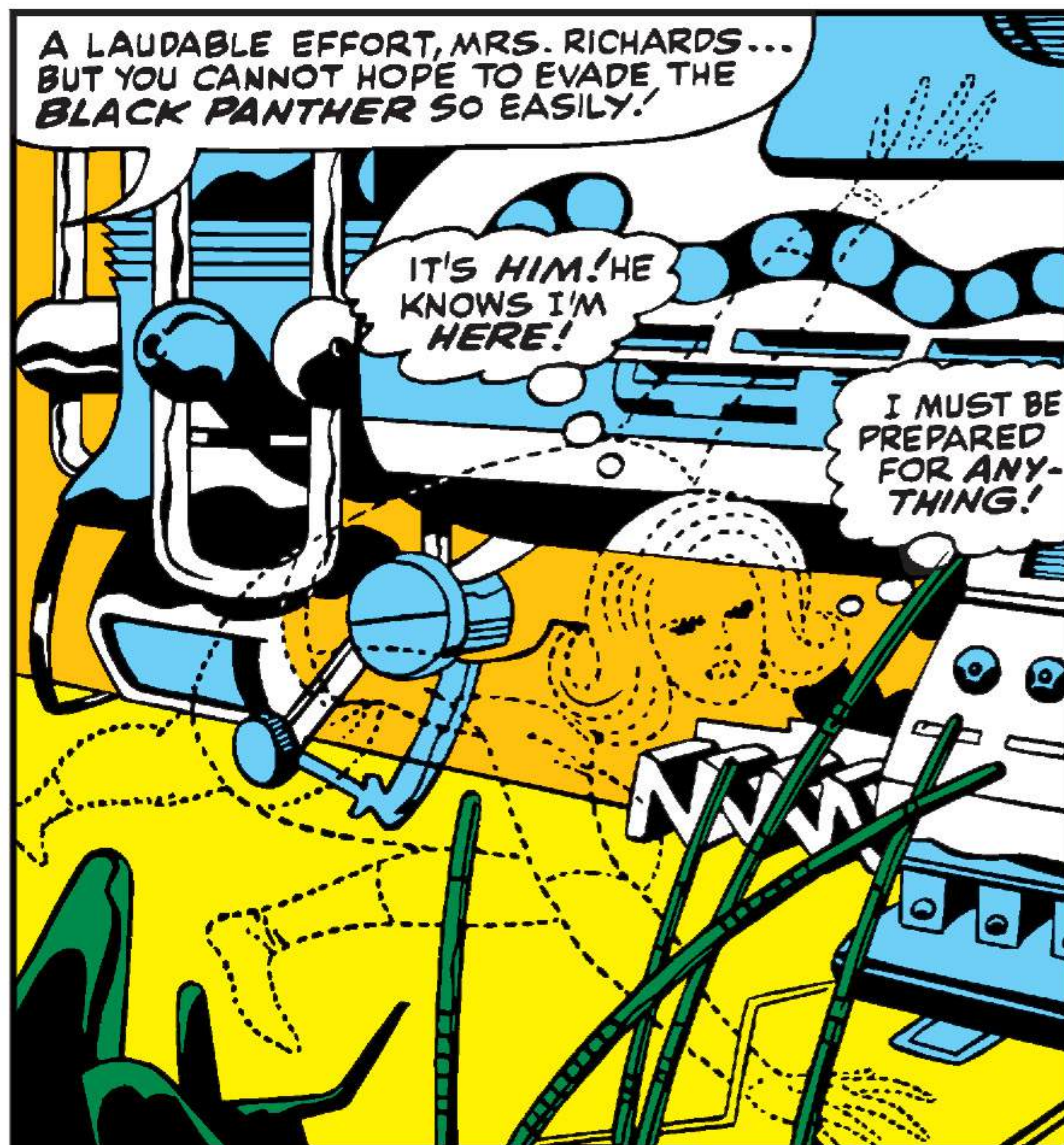
BUT, I NEGLECTED TO TELL YOU ONE THING...

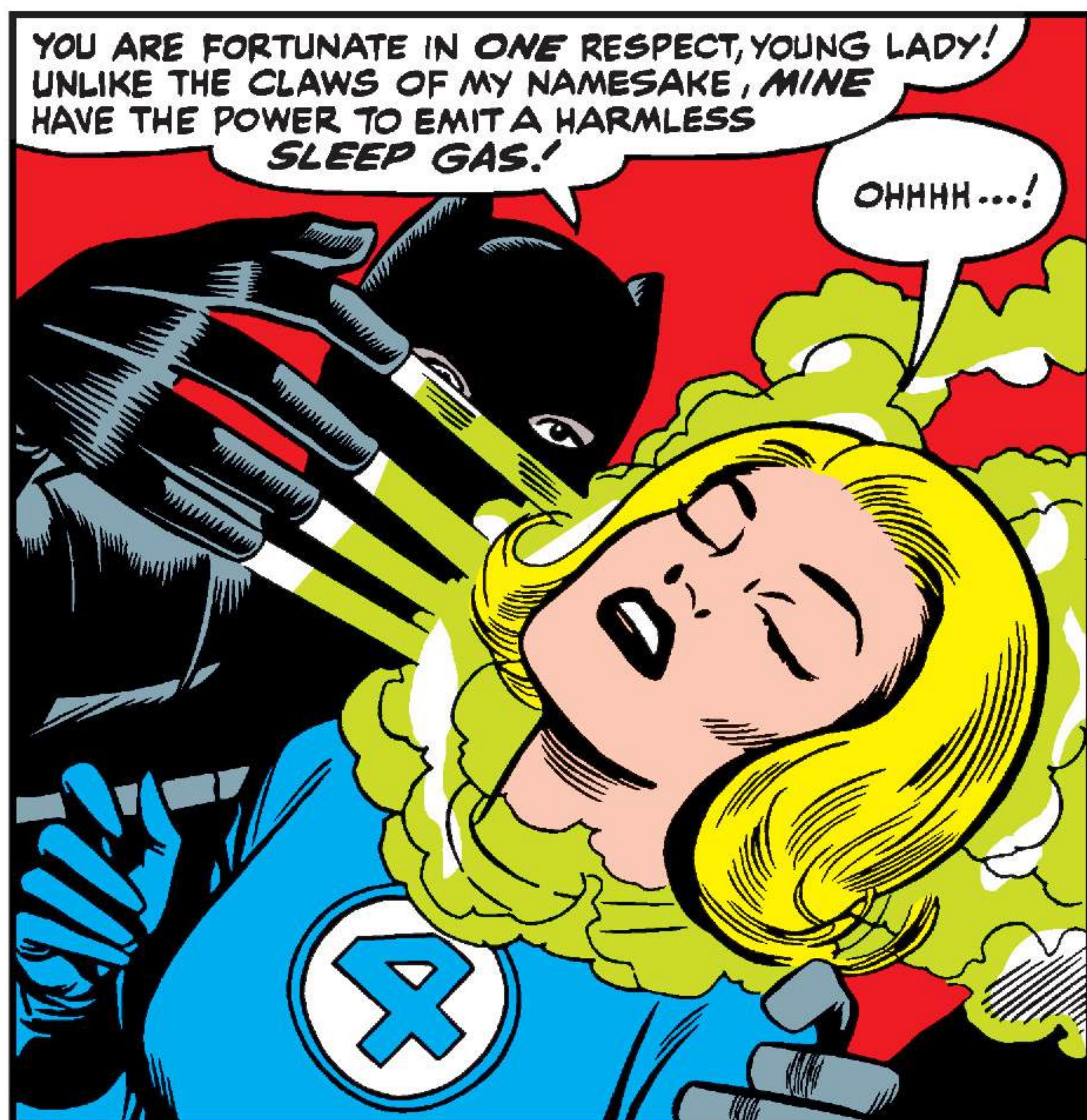
IT IS YOU WHO SHALL BE HUNTED!





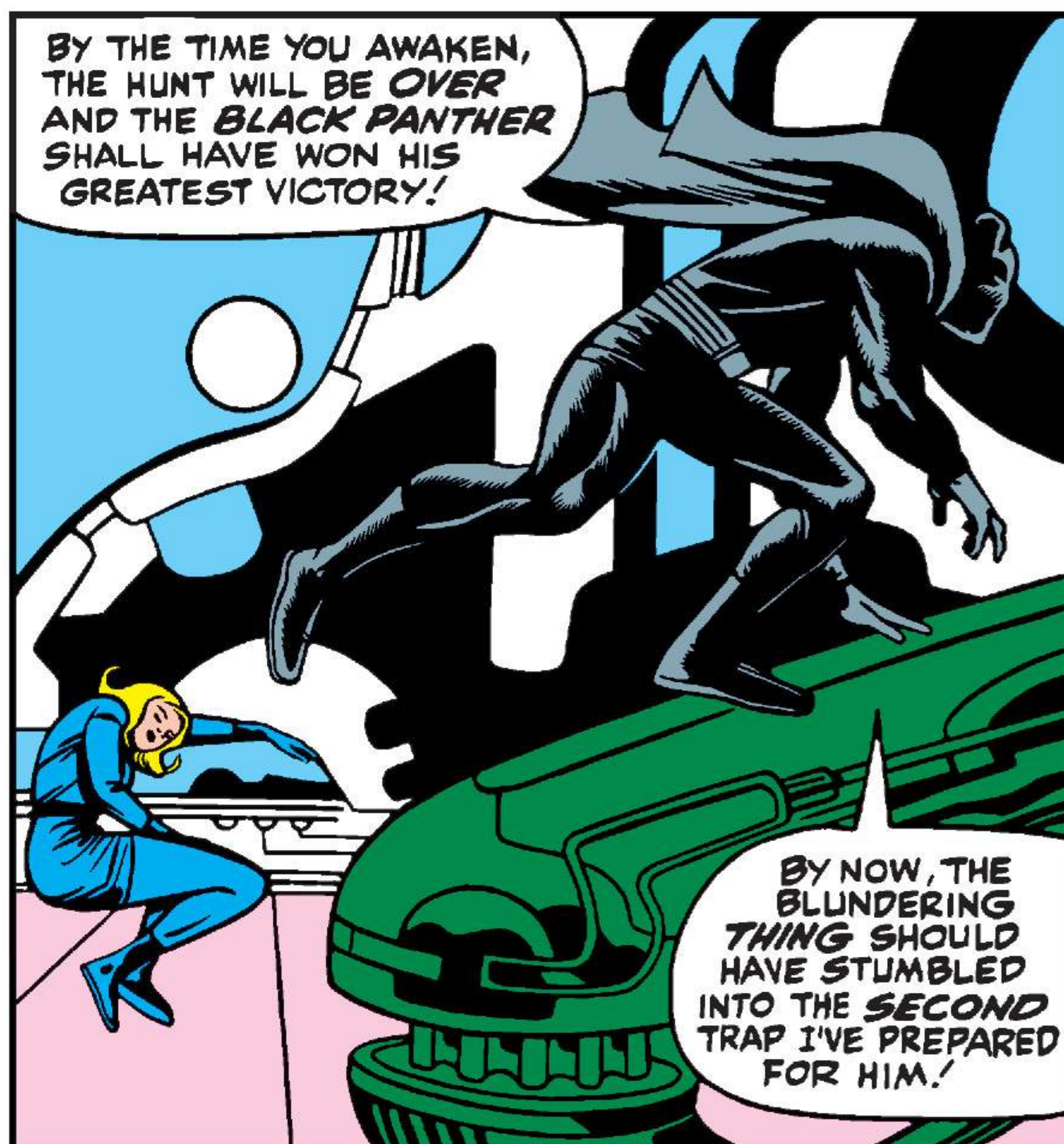






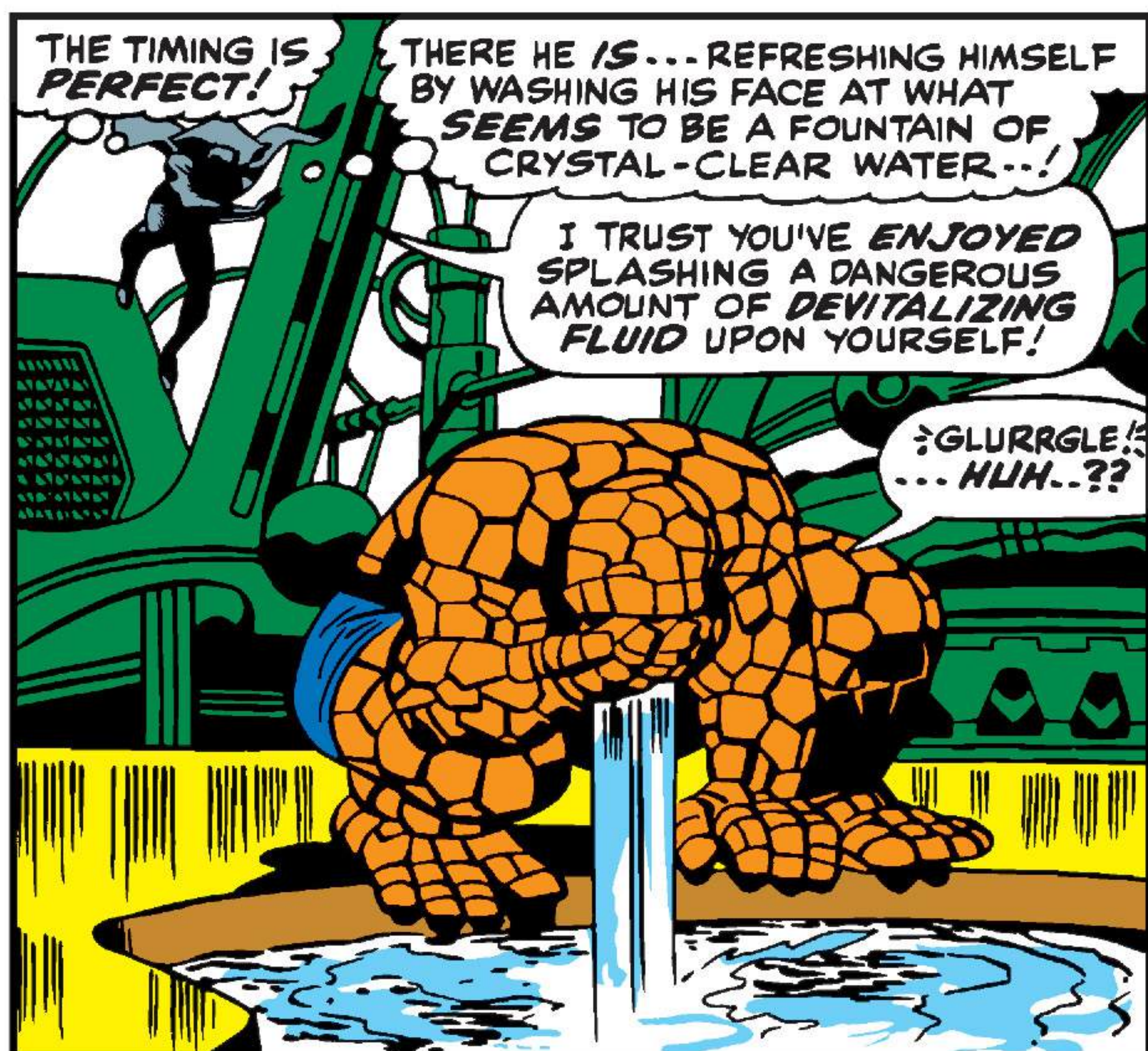
YOU ARE FORTUNATE IN *ONE* RESPECT, YOUNG LADY! UNLIKE THE CLAWS OF MY NAMESAKE, *MINE* HAVE THE POWER TO EMIT A HARMLESS *SLEEP GAS!*

OHHHH...!



BY THE TIME YOU AWAKEN, THE HUNT WILL BE *OVER* AND THE *BLACK PANTHER* SHALL HAVE WON HIS GREATEST VICTORY!

BY NOW, THE BLUNDERING *THING* SHOULD HAVE STUMBLERD INTO THE *SECOND* TRAP I'VE PREPARED FOR HIM!

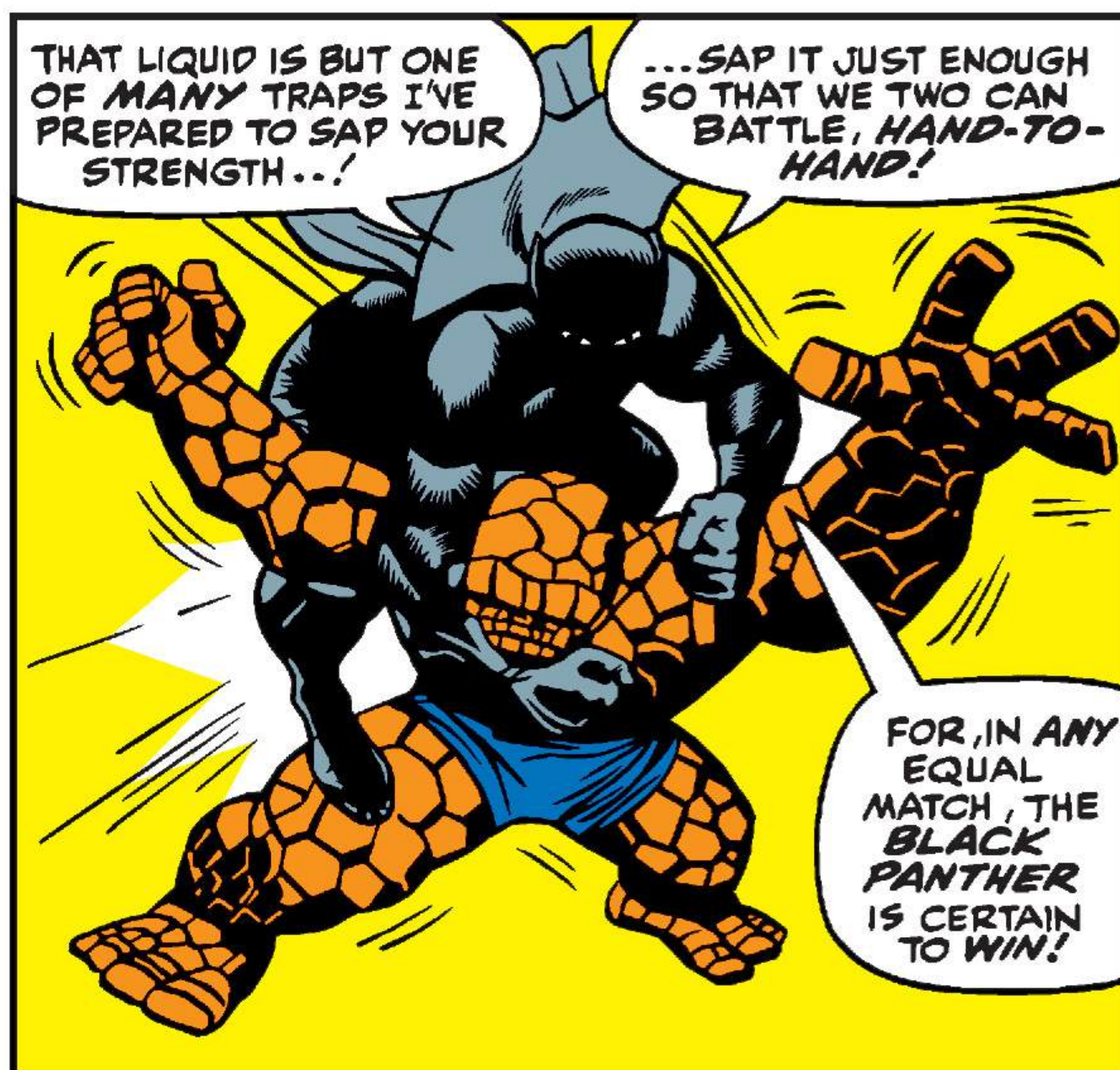


THE TIMING IS *PERFECT!*

THERE HE *IS*... REFRESHING HIMSELF BY WASHING HIS FACE AT WHAT *SEEMS* TO BE A FOUNTAIN OF CRYSTAL-CLEAR WATER...!

I TRUST YOU'VE *ENJOYED* SPLASHING A DANGEROUS AMOUNT OF *DEVITALIZING FLUID* UPON YOURSELF!

GLURGLE... HUH...??



THAT LIQUID IS BUT ONE OF *MANY* TRAPS I'VE PREPARED TO SAP YOUR STRENGTH...!

...SAP IT JUST ENOUGH SO THAT WE TWO CAN BATTLE, *HAND-TO-HAND!*

FOR, IN ANY EQUAL MATCH, THE *BLACK PANTHER* IS CERTAIN TO WIN!



SAY, YOU 'N RICHARDS DIDN'T GO TO THE SAME *PREP SCHOOL* OR SOMETHIN', DIDJA?

IT'S MOST UNLIKELY! ... WHY?

YA *BOTH* GOT THE SAME CORN-BALL HABIT...



...YA CAN TALK A GUY TO DEATH WHILE YER *FIGHTIN'* 'IM!

PERHAPS, BUT I CAN DO FAR *MORE* THAN TALK..

..AS YOU SHALL SEE...!



AMONG OTHER THINGS, I HAVE LONG BEEN THE *BOXING CHAMPION* OF THIS ENTIRE CONTINENT!

WOK!

WELL GOODY FER YOU!...URPPP! 15.

JUST *STAY* THERE, WISE GUY...TILL I GIT TO MY FEET! THAT'S ALL I ASK!

I SHALL BE *HAPPY* TO OBLIGE YOU!

FOR, AFTER ALL ... *UNTIL* YOU STAND, I'LL BE DENIED THE EXQUISITE PLEASURE OF *FLOORING* YOU AGAIN!

GOTTA *STEADY* MY-SELF! CAN'T FALL APART JUST 'CAUSE HE *WEAKENED* ME WITH THAT PHONY WATER!

THEN *SUDDENLY* ...WITH FEROCIOUS SPEED TOTALLY BELYING HIS MAMMOTH BULK, THE *THING* STRIKES BACK...!

POW!

MEBBE *THIS*'LL SHUT YER YAP FER A WHILE!

NUTS! IF NOT FER DRINKIN' THAT BLASTED *WATER*, I'DA *DEMOLISHED* 'IM WITH THAT WHAP! BUT, I'LL BEAT 'IM *ANYHOW*!

YOUR *COURAGE* IS TRULY A MATCH FOR YOUR *FAME*!

BUT YOUR *SKILL*, ALAS, CANNOT NEARLY COMPARE WITH *MINE*!

YEAH? WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT!

HE'S CHARGING INTO ME LIKE A MADDENED *RHINO*! I'VE GOT TO SIDESTEP, AND THEN...

LOOK OUT!! IF YOU UPSET THAT HIGH-VOLTAGE *REFRIGERATION UNIT*, IT'LL FREEZE YOU ALIVE WITHIN *SECONDS*!

BAM!

UNHHH! NOW YA TELL ME!!

TOO LATE!!

YOU ARE INDEED *FORTUNATE*, THING!

YOUR OWN MASSIVE *STRENGTH* WAS BEGINNING TO *RETURN* AGAIN AT THE EXACT MOMENT OF IMPACT!

THUS, YOU WILL *SURVIVE* THE DEEP FREEZE ...THOUGH IT WILL TAKE YOU A WHILE TO *THAW OUT*!

AND NOW FOR YOUR *LEADER*...THE ONE WHOM I CONSIDER THE MOST *DANGEROUS*, FOE OF ALL!

BUT, EVEN THE FABULOUS *MR. FANTASTIC* WILL BE NO MATCH FOR *ME*!

MEANWHILE, WHAT OF **WYATT WINGFOOT**? (...WE THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER ASK!)

SO! THE EDGE OF THE **REAL JUNGLE**, AT LAST! BUT, WHAT'S **THIS?**

A HIDDEN **OBSERVATION POST**... THE **WAKANDAS** HAVE BEEN SECRETLY **MONITORING** THE **F.F.**!

OUR CHIEFTAIN MUST DEFEAT ONLY **ONE MORE** TO ACHIEVE HIS GOAL OF **TOTAL VICTORY!**

THE **BLACK PANTHER** SHALL NOT FAIL!

BUT THEN, WITH THE STEALTHY SILENCE OF HIS PROUD, RED-SKINNED FOREBEARS, THE INDIAN YOUTH STRIKES!

IF I CAN CRIPPLE THE **BLACK PANTHERS COMMUNICATIONS**, IT MAY HELP THE **F.F.**!

BAM!

LUCKY FOR ME THEY WEREN'T EXPECTING AN ATTACK! NOW IF THEY'LL JUST STAY OUT LONG ENOUGH...

THERE! THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO SPY ON ANYONE **ELSE** WITH THESE **ELECTRONIC SCANNERS**!

AND NOW, I'D BETTER GET BACK TO THE **OTHERS**... WHILE I STILL CAN!

KRAK!

I'VE GOT TO **FIND** THEM AGAIN, AND LEAD THEM OUT OF THIS **ARTIFICIAL JUNGLE** INTO THE **REAL ONE**!

SO LONG AS THEY'RE SURROUNDED BY ALL OF THE **BLACK PANTHER'S** ELABORATE TRAPS, THE ODDS MUST BE **AGAINST** THEM!

BUT, MINUTES LATER, AS THE COURAGEOUS YOUTH REACHES HIS DESTINATION...

I'M TOO LATE!! THEY'RE **GONE!**

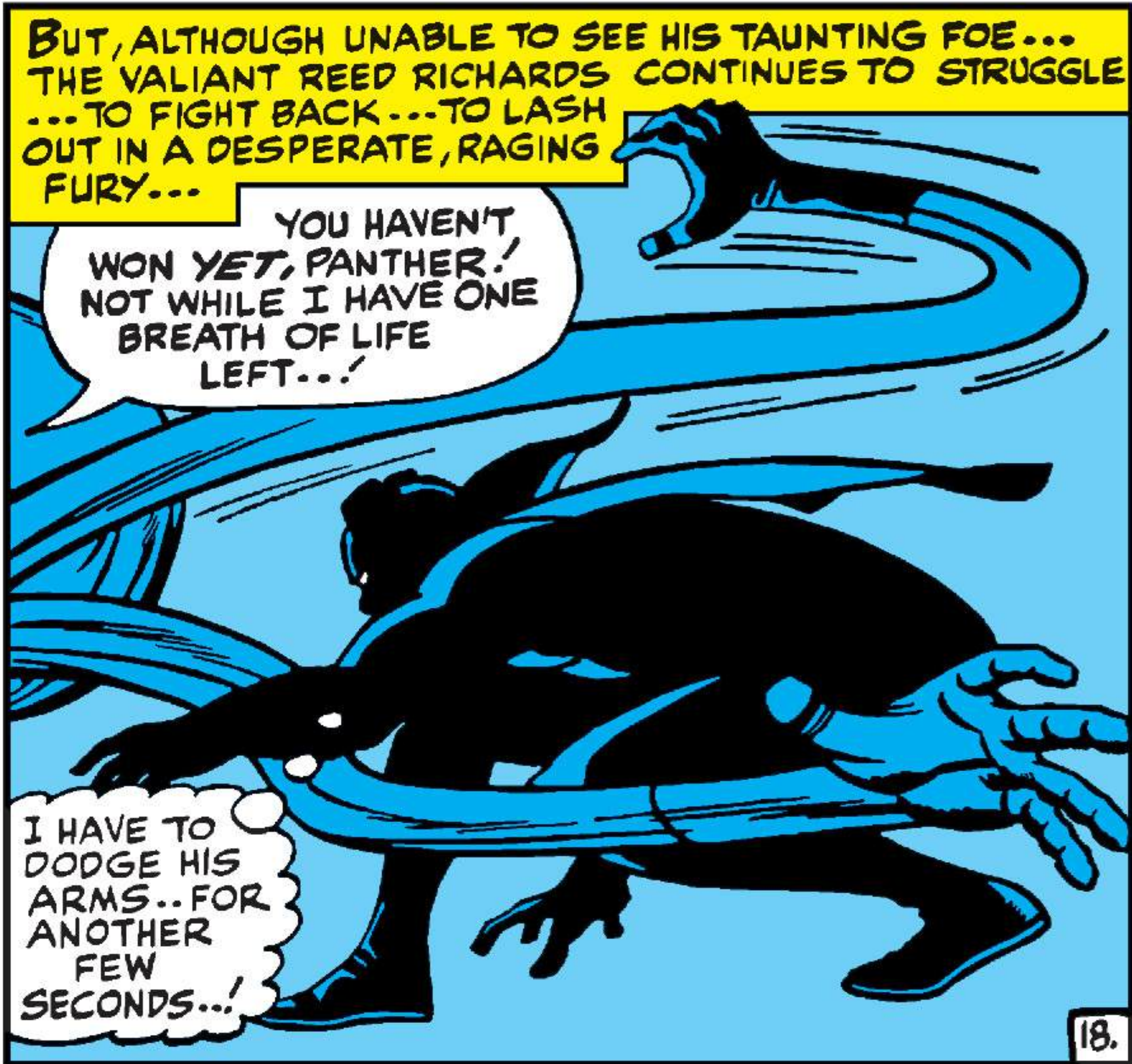
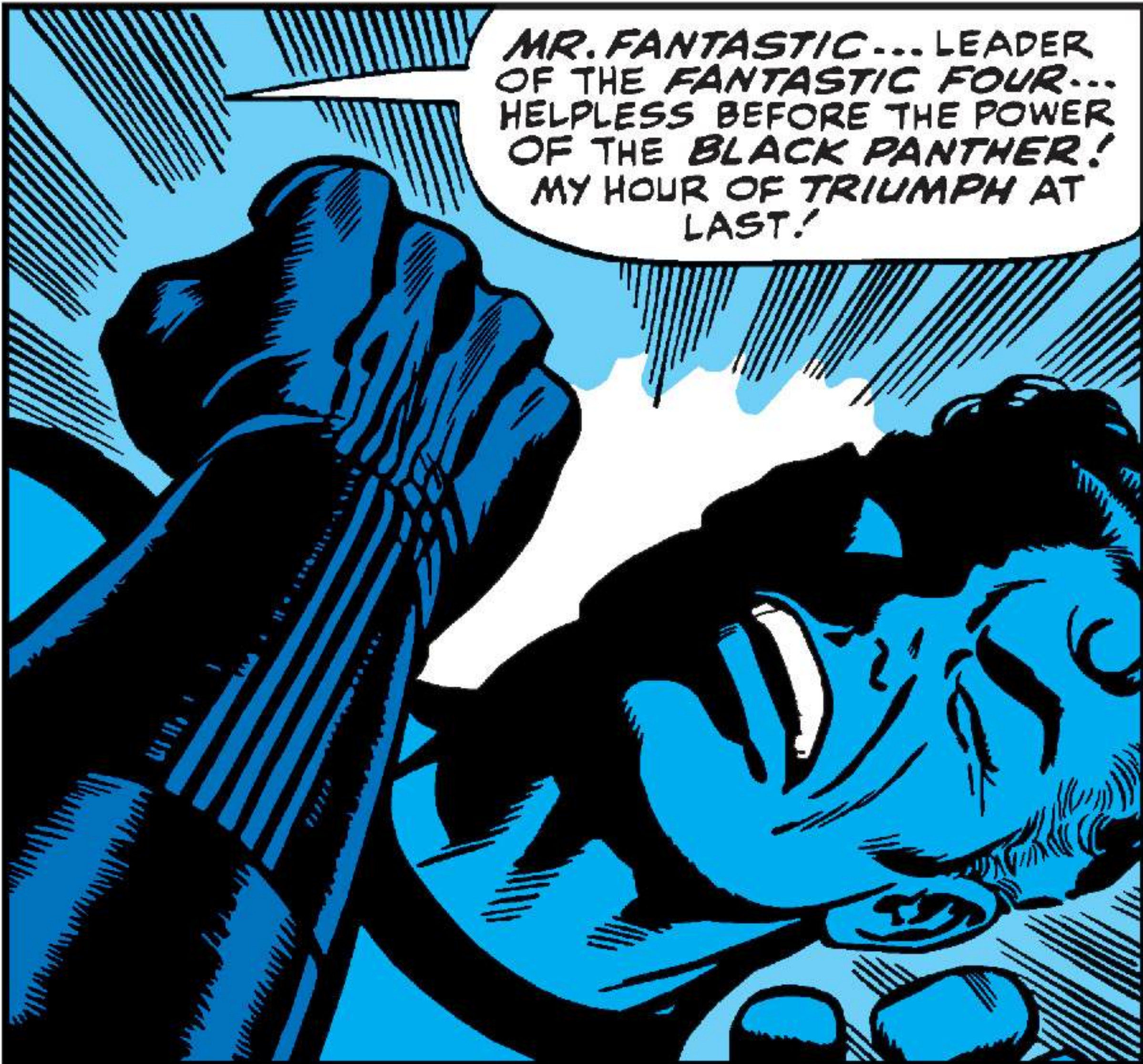
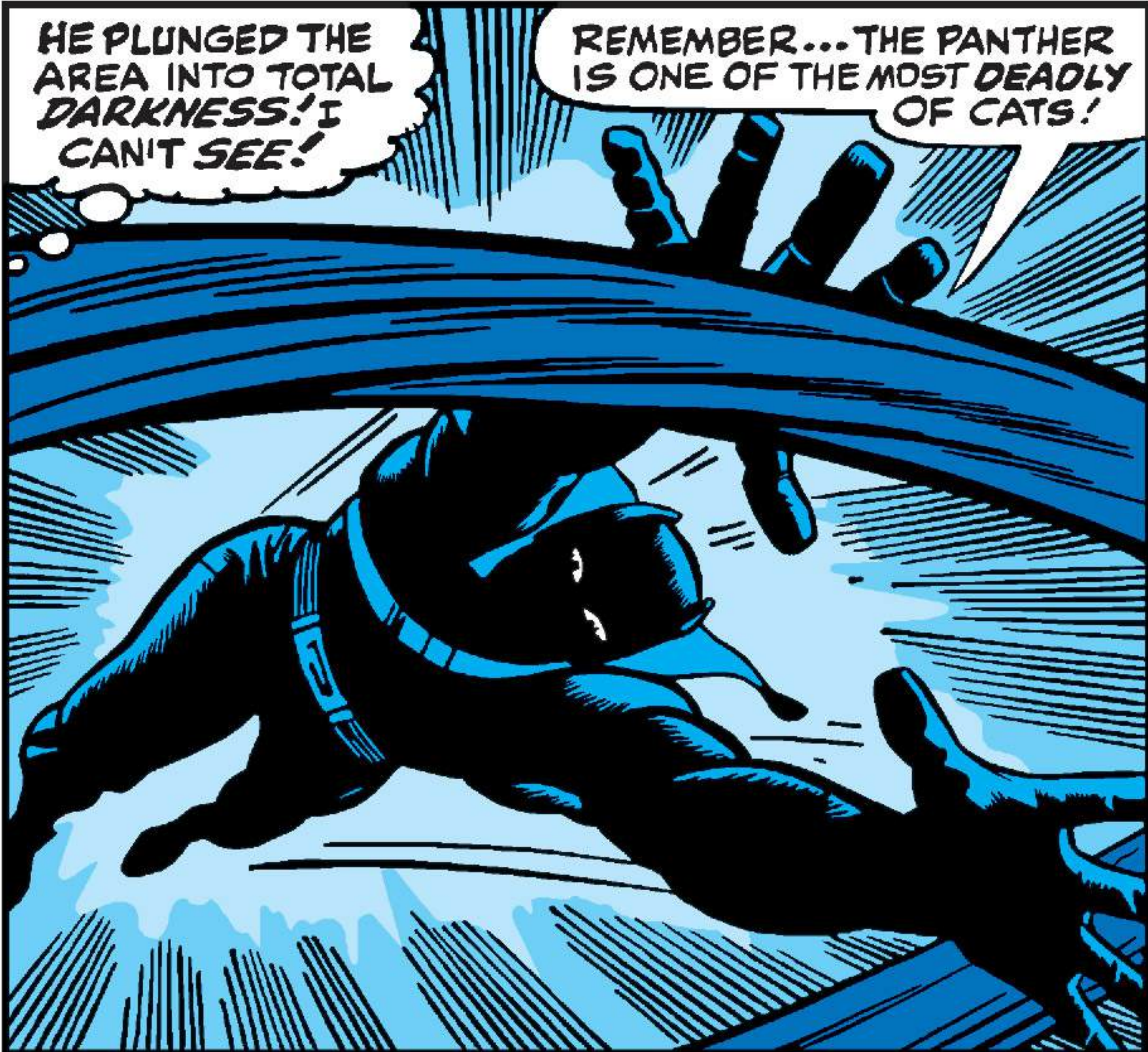
WAIT...WHAT'S **THIS?** THE **GROUND**...IT FEELS **WARM!**

IS THERE SOME SORT OF **DYNAMO** BENEATH ME, OR...CAN IT BE...?!!

THE INTENSITY OF THE HEAT KEEPS **VARYING!** THERE CAN BE ONLY **ONE** EXPLANATION...

IT'S THE **TORCH!** HE'S TRAPPED **BENEATH** ME... AND HE'S TRYING TO **SIGNAL**... TO CATCH MY ATTENTION!

NO MATTER WHAT.. I MUSTN'T **FAIL** HIM!





HERE I AM, RICHARDS!
HERE I AM! IF YOU
WANT ME, JUST REACH
OUT...I'M **WAITING**
FOR YOU!

HE'S DELIBERATELY GOADING
ME--TRYING TO **TRICK** ME IN
SOME WAY! BUT I **MUST** KEEP
GROPING FOR HIM...I **MUST**
GET HIM... **SOMEHOW...**!

I DON'T KNOW YOUR **MOTIVE** FOR
ANY OF THIS... BUT YOU'LL LEARN...
AS SO MANY HAVE LEARNED **BEFORE**
YOU...THAT **NOBODY** ATTACKS THE
FANTASTIC FOUR--

--- NOT WITH-
OUT **PAYING**
FOR THAT PRIVILEGE..
AND **PAYING** IN
FULL!

CLICK!

HE SWITCHED THE
LIGHTS BACK ON!
I CAN **SEE** AGAIN!



I **KNEW** YOUR GROPING HANDS WOULD EVENTUALLY
FIND THEIR WAY INTO MY **SPECIALY-PREPARED**
TITANIUM
CUFFS!

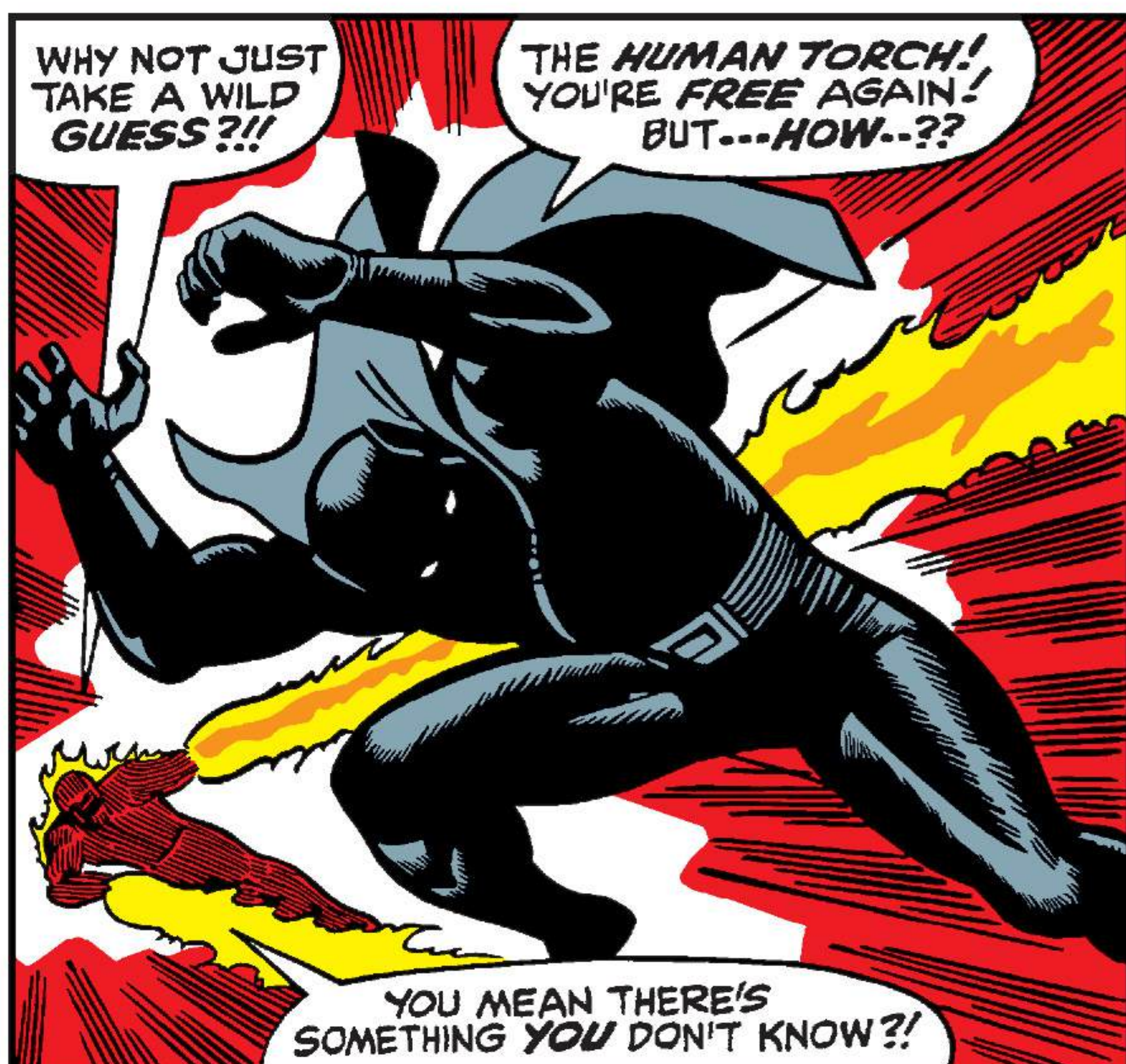
AND SO,
THE **TABLEAU**
ENDS! THE
HUNT IS
OVER!



THE **BLACK**
PANTHER
HAS **WON!**

NOT **YET** YOU HAVEN'T,
MASKED MAN!

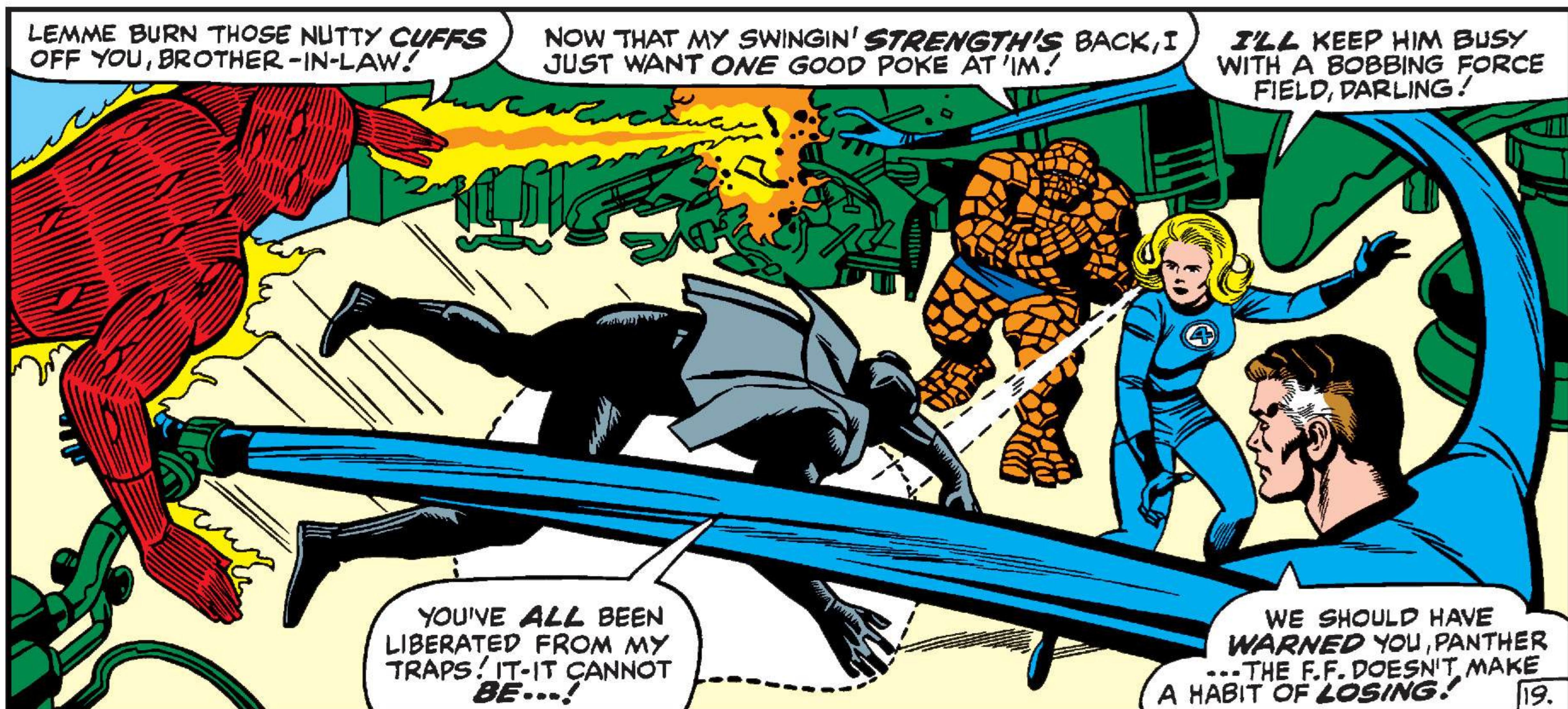
WHO
SAID
THAT?!!



WHY NOT JUST
TAKE A **WILD**
GUESS?!!

THE **HUMAN TORCH!**
YOU'RE **FREE** AGAIN!
BUT...**HOW...??**

YOU MEAN THERE'S
SOMETHING **YOU** DON'T KNOW?!



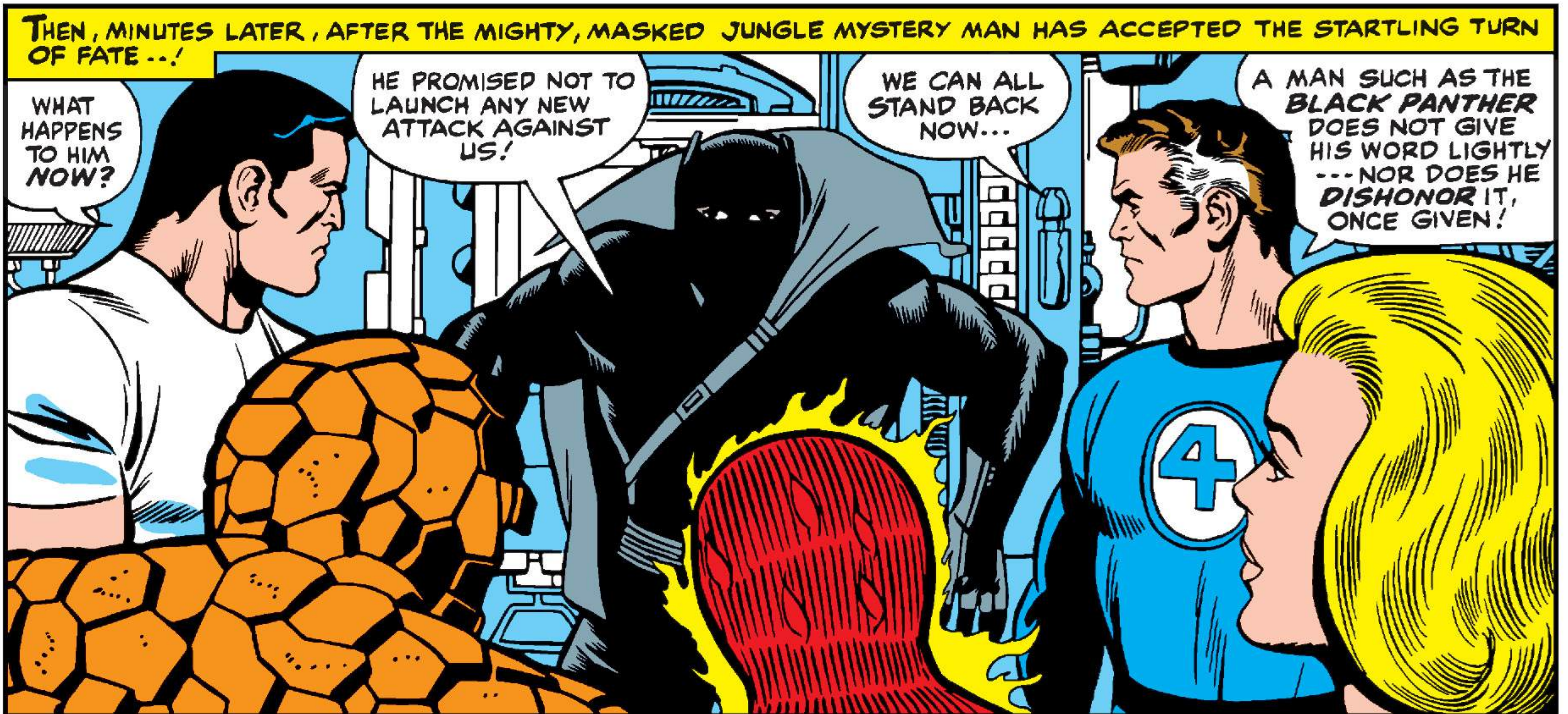
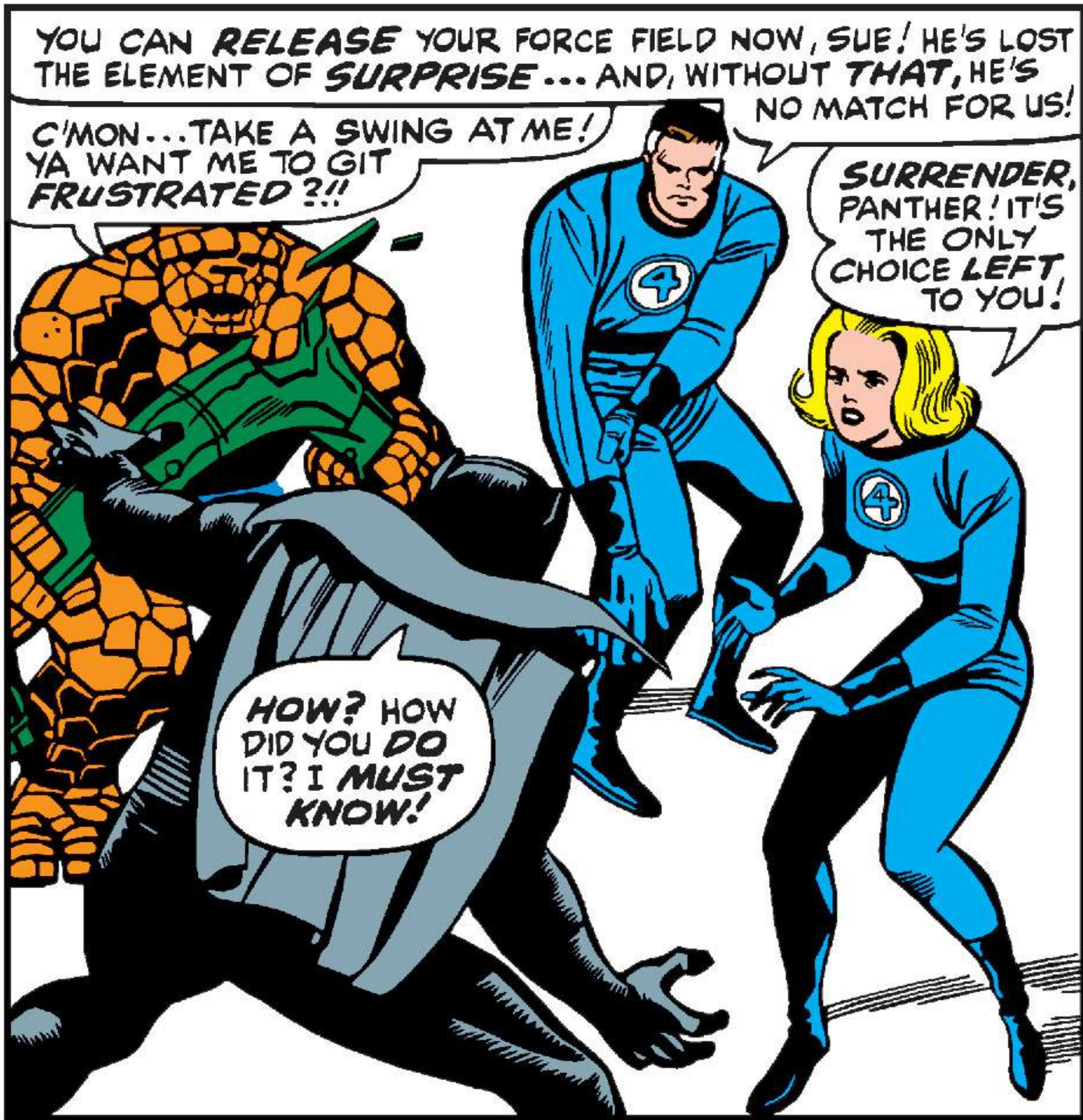
LEMME BURN THOSE **NUTTY CUFFS**
OFF YOU, **BROTHER-IN-LAW!**

NOW THAT MY **SWINGIN' STRENGTH'S** BACK, I
JUST WANT ONE **GOOD POKE** AT 'IM!

I'LL KEEP HIM **BUSY**
WITH A **BOBBING FORCE**
FIELD, **DARLING!**

YOU'VE **ALL** BEEN
LIBERATED FROM MY
TRAPS! IT-IT CANNOT
BE...!

WE SHOULD HAVE
WARNED YOU, **PANTHER**
...THE **F.F.** DOESN'T MAKE
A **HABIT** OF **LOSING!**



WHO'S THE WISE-
GUY THAT'S
HOLDIN'
OUT?



THE M.M.M.S. STILL WANTS YOU!

Make out check or money order for \$1.00 to:

Hi Gang! Let's face it, I'm a Marvel Madman too! Here's my hard earned buck! Rush all your nutty gizmos to . . .

M.M.M.S. MARVEL COMICS GROUP
625 MADISON AVE., NEW YORK, N. Y. 10022

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____
ZIP _____ AGE _____

School,
College or
Occupation:

Fantastic Four ④ Fan Page

Send letters to: LEE and KIRBY
THE MARVEL COMICS GROUP
SECOND FLOOR 625 MADISON AV.
NEW YORK 10022 N. Y.

Dear Stan and Jack,

The Marvel Comic Co. has exceeded all past, present, and future comic organizations. I believe you have the greatest staff in the comic world today. In my opinion, THE FANTASTIC FOUR is your best mag, and lives up to its name as the world's greatest magazine. I think it is disgraceful, though, about your subscription prices. \$1.75—! Do you think that money grows on trees or something? You just take 10, the normal number of comics, times that tidy sum, and what do you get? I don't know what you get, but I get \$17.50! I demand it be changed before we Marvel readers do something drastic. Next, the Inhumans. How could you do such a thing? It is horrible, what you idiots have done to the Inhumans. What is the meaning of the separation between Johnny and Crystal? Also, it is ridiculous that you never told us how Black Bolt lost his voice! I am asking you to please answer this letter seriously, and not with a joke, as you usually do.

Phillip Pearson, Box 95
Kendrick, Idaho

Don't worry, Phil — after the devastating things you said about us, who can joke? Unfortunately, our subscription department says they can't alter their prices — for reasons which we don't understand any more than you do! But, we'd really prefer you to buy our mags on the newsstands anyway—it gets you out in the fresh air more often that way, and we wanna keep you Marvelites as healthy as possible! As for Johnny and Chris—don't worry—they won't be separated forever! And you know we'll tell you how Black Bolt lost his voice sooner or later—in fact, we're kicking around a few ideas on that very subject right now. That's it, tiger!

Dear Stan and Jack,

Just finished reading the latest F.F. and have confirmed a belief which I have long held to be true—that the adventure comic business would come to a dead halt, dry up and blow away were it not for one insignificant adjunct, which is as necessary to comicdom as word balloons. Give up?! That's it! That's the sine qua non without which the public might as well go back to reading novels (horrible thought!). Do you realize that there are more exclamation marks in the above issue (473) than there are in *Madam Bovary*, *the Bible*, and *War and Peace* put together? Hats off to the letterers of comicdom. Where would they all be without the skill and patience to make dots below lines? Even the commonly accepted version of how God started to make the universe (Fiat Lux) was managed without exclamations. Is it necessary, then, to append one (at least) after every "crummp," "twanng," or "bloomp"?

Garlad Storrow, Marlboro College
Marlboro, Vt.

Wow! Yep! It sure is! Zowie!

Dear Stan and Jack,

I've been meaning to write to you since 1963, but always put it off. But now, it's either write or go crazy. Your two newest creations are great. COLLECTORS' ITEM CLASSICS and FANTASY MASTERPIECES are both very good ideas. I have about 30 of your fantasy mags. How about doing the complete series of Dr. Doom in FANTASY MASTERPIECES? And bring back the Tomorrow

Man. After reading F.F., I realize that you guys are nuts! Only Marvel would have a guy named Silver Surfer! But, I think he's great. In closing, I have news for you. In the "Didja Know" department, you stated that the *first* Doc Strange appeared in IRON MAN, which is right. What you didn't know is that he appeared in ish #41. I think I should get a no-prize for that.

Don Jarvis, 45 Lawn Ave.
Warwick, R. I.

Okay, Donnie—one no-prize comin' up—we'll deliver it as soon as our Fantasti-car gets its yearly tune-up. (The only thing is, since we don't remember the exact ish—and haven't any back number copies to check—we have to take your word for it that you're right! But, that's okay! Who ever heard of a Marvel madman being wrong?)

Dear Stan and Jack,

Between Galactus, the Watcher, Odin, and Eternity, you have lost me completely. There are now far too many "all-powerful" characters in your comic books. These characters, though they make for exciting stories, also make your tales unbelievable. This is fine if a reader only buys one or two of your titles, but, as a fan who buys almost every comic you produce (excluding MILLIE THE MODEL and RAWHIDE KID), I can tell you that the existence of too many omnipotent characters in your stories detracts from the realism that helps make your mags as great as they are, and also ruins your less powerful villains. After all, if the F.F. manages to defeat Galactus, how could they ever have trouble defeating Dr. Doom? So, after the threat of Galactus is over, let's get back to some good ol' one-issue fights with the old sparring partners. No more of these all-powerful cats, dig?

Larry Bush, 134-25 166th Place
Jamaica, N. Y.

You've brought up an interesting point, Larry — one which we'd like a few more opinions on—and, knowing our frantic ones, we shouldn't have too long to wait! Soon as we tally the mail, we'll letcha know how many other meditating Marvelites see eyeball to eyeball with you. In the meantime, our own opinion is that nobody can embellish those nutty universe-shattering menaces like King Kirby can; and we just haven't the heart to stifle that awesome artistic imagination of his! Besides, we flip over that kind of yarn! But, que sera, sera!

Dear Stan and Jack,

Although some fans seem to dislike your continued stories, I am grateful to you for printing them in the first place. These stories allow you time for plot and character development, which heightens the reader's interest in the story. Before I close, I must comment on F.F. #48, which concludes the adventure with the Inhumans. It was a great story, but I wasn't satisfied with the way Johnny Storm and Crystal were treated. Stan, whatever you do, those two must be reunited. Long live the M.M.M.S.

J. W. Goodwin, Jr., 2426 Belvedere
Wilmington, N. C.

Amen, J. W.! And, as we told Phil Pearson elsewhere on this page, if you think we've forgotten about cuddly

Chris—don't believe it! We don't yet know where, when, or even how — but in the name of Ben's Aunt Petunia, we pledge that Johnny and Crystal will meet again! Unfortunately, we don't yet know whether it will be a happy or tragic meeting (not that we'd give it away if we *did* know!), but bear with us, and we'll find out together!



Dear Stan and Jack,

Three of us here at Haverford College have recently been overwhelmed by the astounding brilliance of the Hulk and his cohorts. As for the Fantastic Four, no words can express our awesome admiration at their amazing adventures. The three of us do a weekly rock'n'roll show on the campus radio station, WHRC. In a glorious attempt to add more prestige to our weekly performance and to appeal to the more cultured denizens of the college community, we have usurped the titles of our three favorite Marvel characters—the Hulk, the Human Torch, and Doctor Doom. Local consensus of opinion indicates that our show is definitely CLOBBERIN' TIME. We praise and applaud the persistently powerful personality portraits which you potently promulgate in your perennially pandemonious paper. We pose a puzzler, however—what accounts for the gratuitous, garish, gross greenness of the Hulk? 'Nuff said! FLAME ON!

Dave "Torch" Wieck, John "Hulk" Stuart,
Vernon "Doom" Haskell
Haverford College, Haverford, Penna.

So, you wanna know why our incredible, iconoclastic, inveterate rampager is green, eh? The answer happens to be simplicity itself, lads—think how silly he'd look if his skin was *purple*!

Dear Stan and Jack,

Just read FANTASTIC FOUR #49—excellent, as usual. The F.F. have come a long way. They've left the world of comics, and entered the world of pure fantasy—and I must say I love it! Ever since the Frightful Four incident started, and then the Inhumans (who *must* have their own mag), on down to Galactus... The F.F. have pioneered the world of science fiction. Like all your unique creations, they have a technique all their own, and it is unexcelled in the field of comic books—or in any form of literature. You may or may not realize it, but (in my unabashed opinion), you have created a team of super-heroes so different that they are the world's greatest science fiction creations, and I commend you, Stan, and you, Jack, for creating them.

Eugene Bearringer, 508 Eleanor
Toledo, Ohio

We're sorry that your natural reticence has inhibited you somewhat so that you weren't able to be as effusive in your praise as you might otherwise have been, Gene—but we get the message anyway, pal—thanks a heap!

Dear Stan and Jack,

I was just sitting here at my desk, and I thought I'd take a break from reading my F.F. mag by writing you a letter.

Mainly, I want to say that I go ape over your use of photographs. Two other things—for the first time, in #48, one of your heroes needed a shave, and the "Silver Surfer" is a corny name. In some of your comics, I've seen you use full-page pictures. I like these very much, but I was wondering if you could make pictures the full length of the mag? Get what I mean? This way, the action pictures would be twice as good. Say, I dig your FANTASY MASTERPIECES magazine! That fab photo of ol' Stan gave me an idea. Since this magazine shows the early work of your artists, how about having a photo of one of these guys in every ish, telling about the stories?

Doug Nikkel, 43 Rainbow Dr.
Humboldt, Iowa

Good idea, Doug. But, we can't do it every ish, or we'd run out of photos before you can say Yancy Street! However, we'll do it once in a while, shooting for the element of *surprise*, as usual! Y'know, it's a funny thing — about a half dozen liltin' letters so far have also referred to the Silver Surfer as a corny name. Yet, we can still remember how we patted each other on the back when we made it up—we thought it was an inspiration! It just goes to prove—the more you know, the more you realize how little you know! (But, darn it, we still think it's a groovy name!)

Dear Stan and Jack,

Congratulations on a job well-done, referring to your complete line of Marvel Comics. My interest in comics, which dates back to 1940, lagged terribly till you fellows went to work in earnest: how your competitors must be tossing and turning at night, wondering what on earth happened. I wonder if they realize that a good share of their plight is as much their *own* fault as the "fault" of the fabulous Marvel staff! They were a lazy bunch, weren't they? They actually didn't give a fig for the readers; but look at them now!— letters pages, fancy blurbs, guest stars, the whole works. A great many heads must have rolled! Now, before I become too long-winded, I'd like to submit *my* suggestion list; something, undoubtedly, which you boys get mighty bored at receiving in the old mail bag... First, drop the westerns; you've far too much talent to waste on these. And second, you boys have the only limitless, unmatched—no pun intended—character in the field of comics with the Human Torch. Your competitors would simply go out of their minds trying to duplicate him. In fact, he can not be duplicated, much less imitated. I can see it now—each company desperately trying to outdo a magazine titled simply, THE HUMAN TORCH. They'd turn up with Fireball; the Flaming Being; Torchman; and heaven only knows what else. No kidding, the Human Torch, in a magazine of his own, would take the nation by storm, leaving the other companies limp. Third, you'd dazzle your readers, and gain a few thousand in the bargain, if you'd have a war between Sub-Mariner and the Human Torch. Conflict between these two is too much of a "natural" to be discarded, don't you agree? Lastly, it constantly amazes me to watch Captain America sail along with no change in uniform—I suspicion that you have a sentimental attachment to Cap. You fellows deserve many compliments, and, I observe on your letters pages, you're getting quite a few. Keep up the MARVELous work.

Donald J. Brown, 1407 Alexander
Colorado Springs, Colo.

Thanks, Don. You've swelled our heads, inflated our egos, and given us eyestrain! So, the least we can do is tell you that we think THE HUMAN TORCH would be a great mag — and, if we ever get the time — who knows? But, till then—we *do* have a dozen or so other titles that we're still pushin'—and it won't make us the least bit angry if you buy *them* by the carload! See ya!

NEXT ISH: Mighty Marvel! does it again! You'll thrill to the origin of the Black Panther—and meet the astounding Mr. Klaw! You'll cheer the spectacle and surprises from Stan and Jack at their imaginative best! And you'll be able to smile with satisfaction, in years to come, when they ask if you were a part of the magnificent, magical Marvel Age of Comics! So, don't miss the eerie excitement that awaits you in F.F. #53 — it's merely the greatest! 'Nuff said!

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

APPROVED
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COMICS
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AUTHORITY



MARVEL
COMICS
GROUP

12¢

Fantastic Four

53
AUG

“THE WAY
IT BEGAN!”



THE FABULOUS *F.F.* LEARN THE SECRET OF THE BLACK PANTHER

THE WAY IT BEGAN!!

HAVING SUCCESSFULLY EVADED ALL THE UNCANNY TRAPS OF THE *BLACK PANTHER*, THE TRIUMPHANT *FANTASTIC FOUR*, ACCOMPANIED BY *WYATT WINGFOOT*, ARE AWARDED A HEROES' CEREMONY---

LET THE
DANCE OF
FRIEND-
SHIP
BEGIN!

SHEESH!
A BUNCH'A
FRED
ASTAIRES
THEY AINT!

RELAX, BEN!
IT'S BETTER'N
BEING SHOT AT
BY THEM!

THOUGH THE *WAKANDA TRIBE* LIVES IN THE TRADITION OF THEIR FOREFATHERS, THEY POSSESS MODERN, *SUPER-SCIENTIFIC WONDERS* WE CAN ONLY MARVEL AT! THERE'S AN INCREDIBLE MYSTERY HERE--AND ONLY THE *BLACK PANTHER* HIMSELF KNOWS ALL THE ANSWERS!

THEY ARE
NOT THE
ORDINARY
NATIVE TRIBE
THEY SEEM
TO BE!

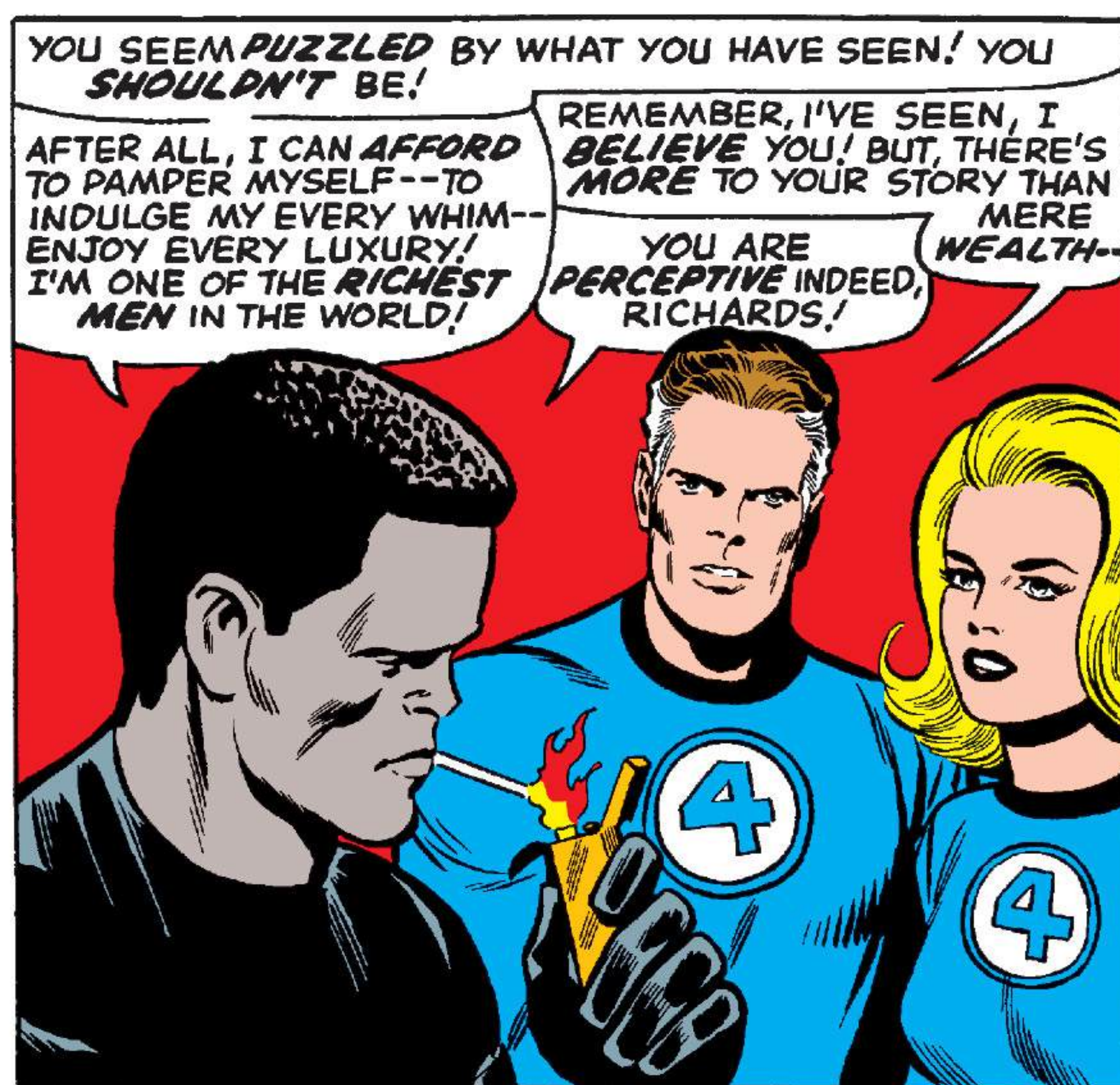
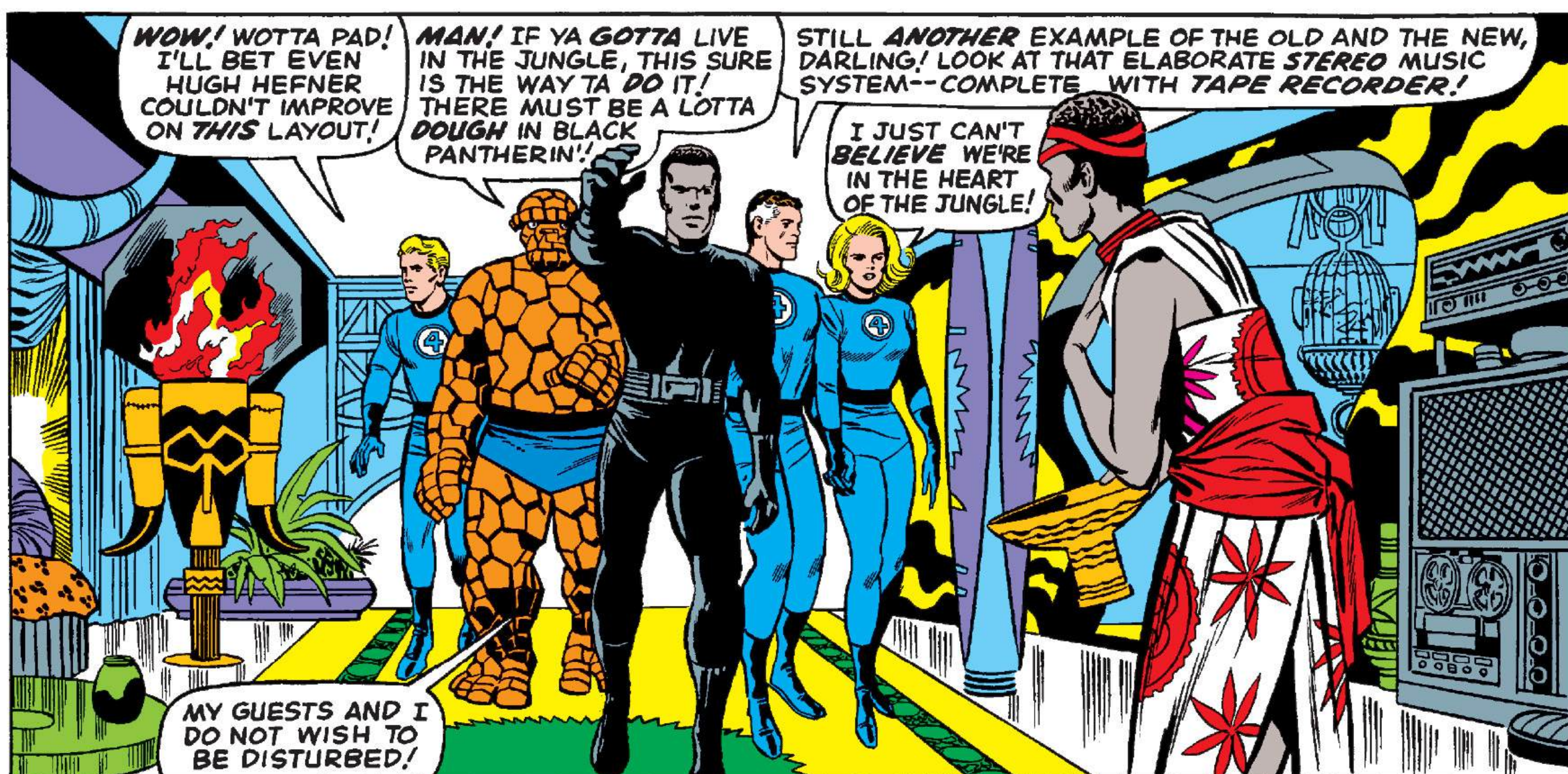
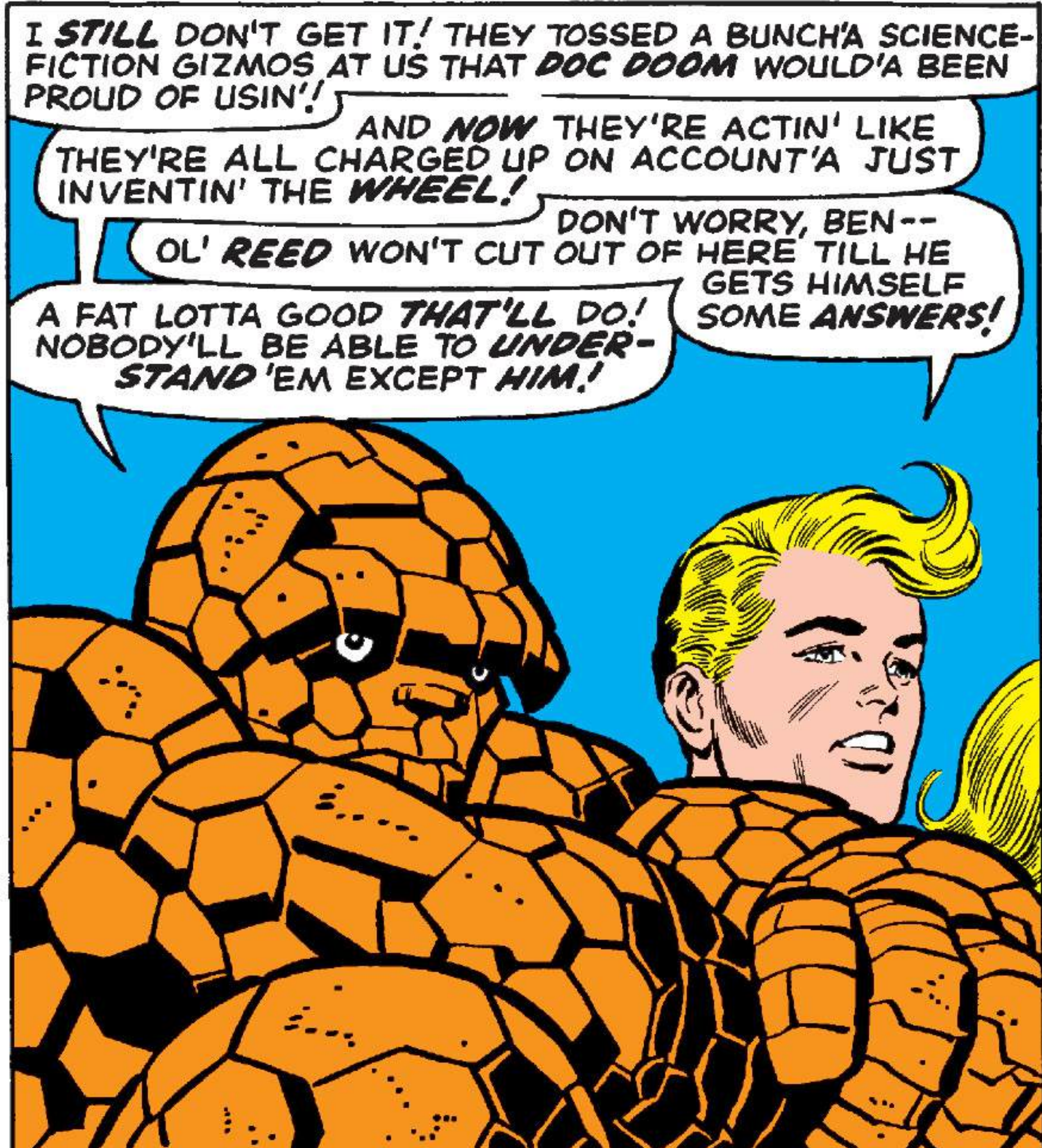
SCRIPT: STAN LEE

ART: JACK KIRBY

INKS: JOE SINNOTT

LETTERING: ARTIE SIMEK

NATIVE DANCES: THE BALLET FORBUSH
TERPSICHOREAN TROUPE



BUT, EVEN AS THE DRAMATIC *BLACK PANTHER* BEGINS HIS REVELATION, TWO MEMBERS OF THE TERRITORIAL PATROL COME UPON A STAGGERING DISCOVERY--

THE ENTIRE AREA SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN *RIPPED UP*--AS THOUGH BY GIANT HANDS! THERE ARE NO ANIMALS--NO BIRDS!! EVERY FORM OF LIFE HAS BEEN *FRIGHTENED AWAY*!

AND THESE HOLES IN THE GROUND--IMPOSSIBLE THOUGH IT SEEMS, THEY CAN ONLY BE *TRACKS*--THE FOOTPRINTS OF SOME GARGANTUAN CREATURE!

CAN IT BE THAT THE RUMORS OF MONSTROUS BEASTS ROAMING THE JUNGLE ARE *TRUE*?!!



AT FIRST, I THOUGHT THEY WERE JUST SUPERSTITION--OLD WIVES' TALES TO FRIGHTEN LITTLE CHILDREN! BUT NOW--I CAN ALMOST *SENSE* THE DANGER UPON US!

HOLD IT! DID YOU JUST FEEL THE GROUND TREMBLE--AS THOUGH BENEATH THE PRESSURE OF SOME TITANTIC WEIGHT?!!



THERE! I FELT IT AGAIN!! THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT--SOMETHING IS BEHIND US!

SWIFTLY TURNING, THE TWO MEN RECOIL IN MUTE SHOCK AT THE AWESOME SIGHT THAT GREETES THEIR EYES--AS THEY FIRE WILDLY--DESPERATELY, AT THAT WHICH CONFRONTS THEM--!

IT'S LIKE A GIGANTIC *GORILLA*--AN UNBELIEVABLE CRIMSON ANTHROPOID!!

KEEP FIRING! OUR ONLY CHANCE IS TO FRIGHTEN HIM AWAY WITH OUR GUNSHOTS!! IT'S TOO LATE TO RUN!

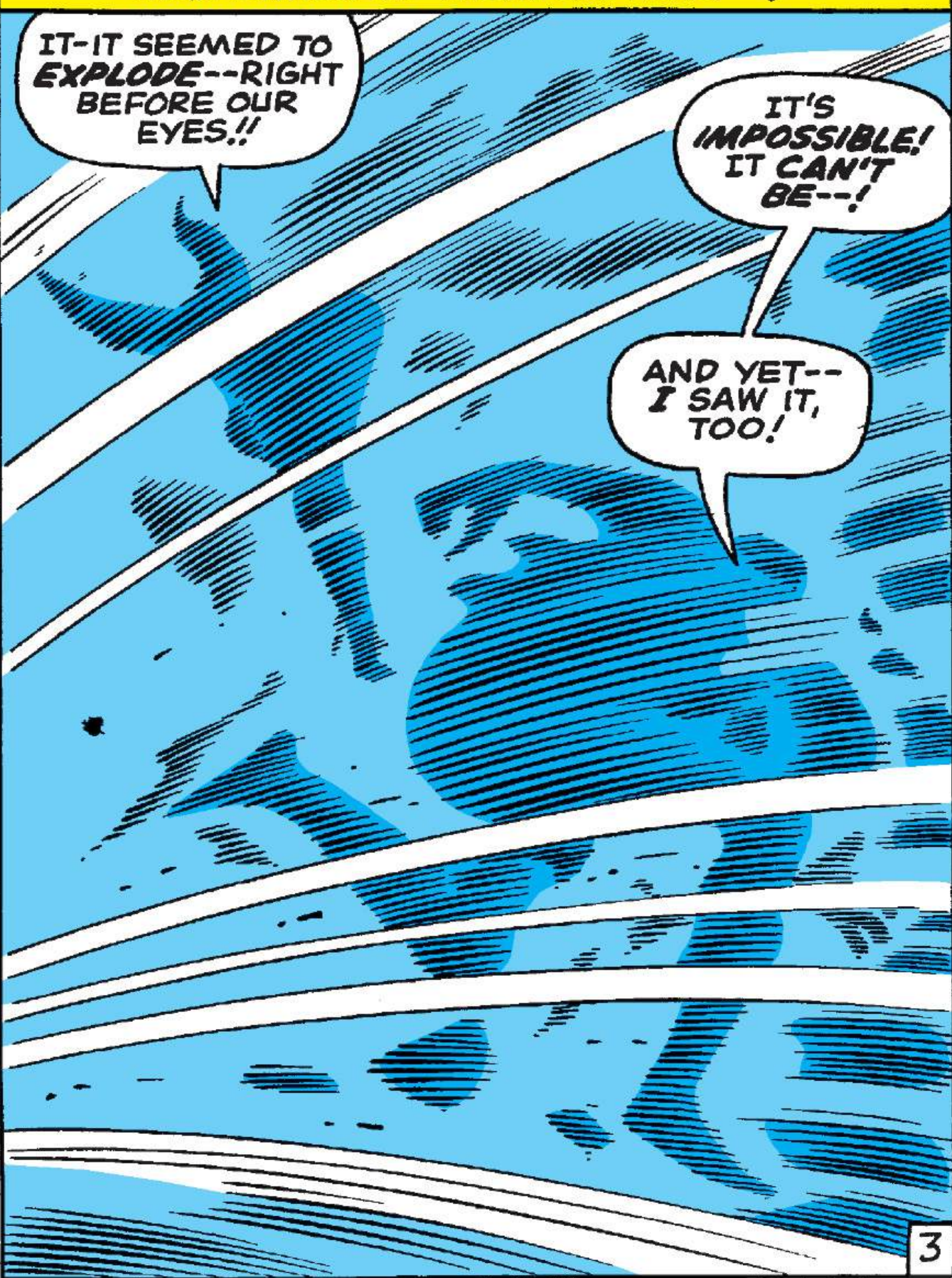


HOWEVER, THE GUNFIRE OF THE TWO COURAGEOUS PATROLMEN CAUSES A PHENOMENON FAR DIFFERENT THAN EITHER OF THEM EXPECTS--!

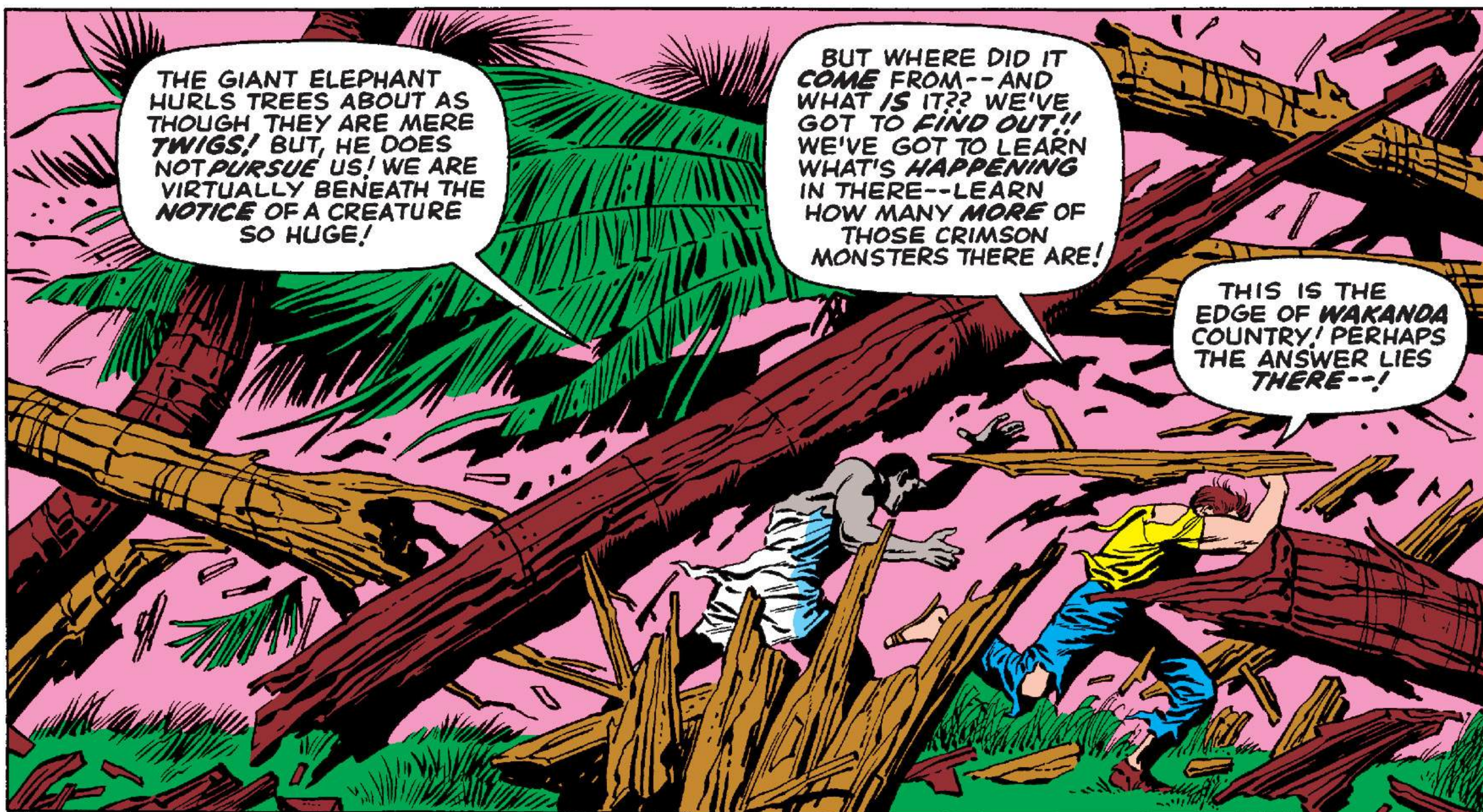
IT-IT SEEMED TO *EXPLODE*--RIGHT BEFORE OUR EYES!!

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! IT CAN'T BE--!

AND YET--I SAW IT, TOO!







THE GIANT ELEPHANT HURLS ABOUT AS THOUGH THEY ARE MERE TWIGS! BUT, HE DOES NOT PURSUE US! WE ARE VIRTUALLY BENEATH THE NOTICE OF A CREATURE SO HUGE!

BUT WHERE DID IT COME FROM-- AND WHAT IS IT?? WE'VE GOT TO FIND OUT!! WE'VE GOT TO LEARN WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THERE--LEARN HOW MANY MORE OF THOSE CRIMSON MONSTERS THERE ARE!

THIS IS THE EDGE OF WAKANDA COUNTRY! PERHAPS THE ANSWER LIES THERE--!



AND, SPEAKING OF THE WAKANDAS, IT'S TIME ONCE AGAIN TO REJOIN THE BLACK PANTHER AS HE CONTINUES HIS NARRATIVE--

MY FATHER WAS THE GREATEST, WISEST CHIEFTAIN IN ALL OF AFRICA!

AND, HIS SKILL AS A HUNTER WAS SECOND TO NONE!



YAWWWWW!

SO, I'M BORING YOU, AM I?

BEN! CUT THAT OUT!

AWW, I CAN'T HELP IT! I SAW THIS IN A MILLION JUNGLE MOVIES!

SUPPOSE I TELL YOU YOU'RE SITTING ON TWENTY MILLION DOLLARS!



DO YOU MEAN THIS MARBLE BENCH BENEATH US?

I DIDN'T EVEN PAY ANY ATTENTION TO IT! BUT, MARBLE ISN'T WORTH THAT MUCH MONEY!

LOOK CLOSELY, JOHNNY! THAT ISN'T MARBLE --!

YOU'RE RIGHT, SUE! IT'S SOME SORT OF GLISTENING METALLIC ORE!

SAY IT IN ENGLISH-- JUST FER ONCE!

THE NAME OF THAT METAL IS VIBRANIUM!



EVEN I KNOW THAT COMES FROM THE WORD VIBRATE! WHAT'S IT DO--SHIVER UP A STORM IF YA TOUCH IT?

EXACTLY THE OPPOSITE, IRASCIBLE ONE! IT ABSORBS VIBRATIONS-- YOU MIGHT EVEN SAY IT SWALLOWS THEM!

BUT, WHAT MAKES IT SO VALUABLE?

DON'T YOU SEE, DEAR--?

IT CAN BE WORTH A FORTUNE TO OUR MISSILE PROGRAM ALONE! ROCKETS MADE OF VIBRANIUM WOULD NEVER GO OFF COURSE DUE TO VIBRATIONS!

THAT IS CORRECT, RICHARDS!



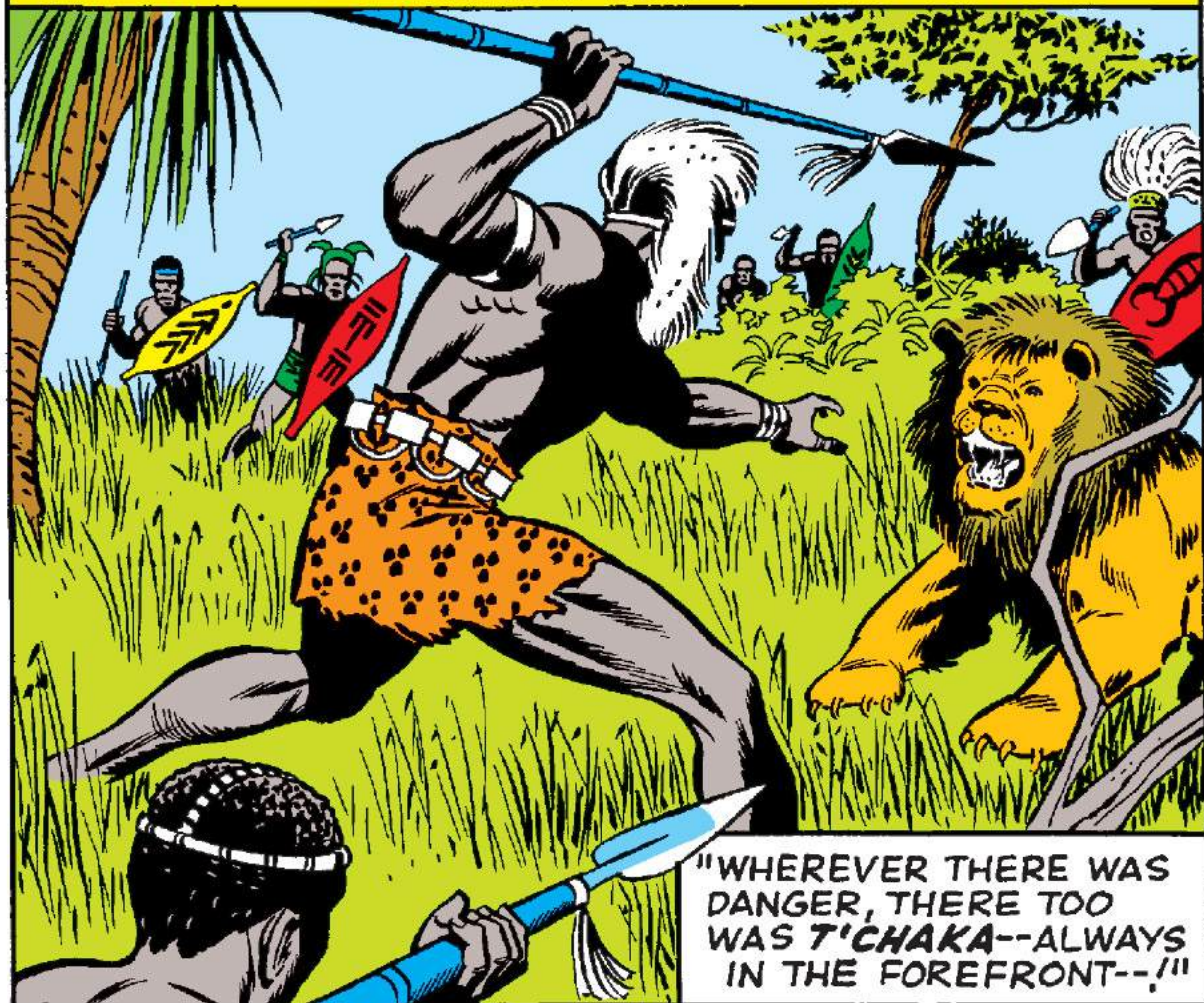
OUR VIRTUALLY
INEXHAUSTIBLE
SUPPLY OF **VIBRANIUM**
COMES FROM THAT
SACRED MOUND WHICH
HAS BORDERED THE
LAND OF THE WAKANDAS
SINCE THE DAWN OF
TIME!



EVERY WAKANDA CHIEFTAIN IS PLEDGED
TO PROTECT THE SACRED VIBRANIUM
WITH HIS **LIFE**-- JUST AS MY
FATHER WAS SO PLEDGED!

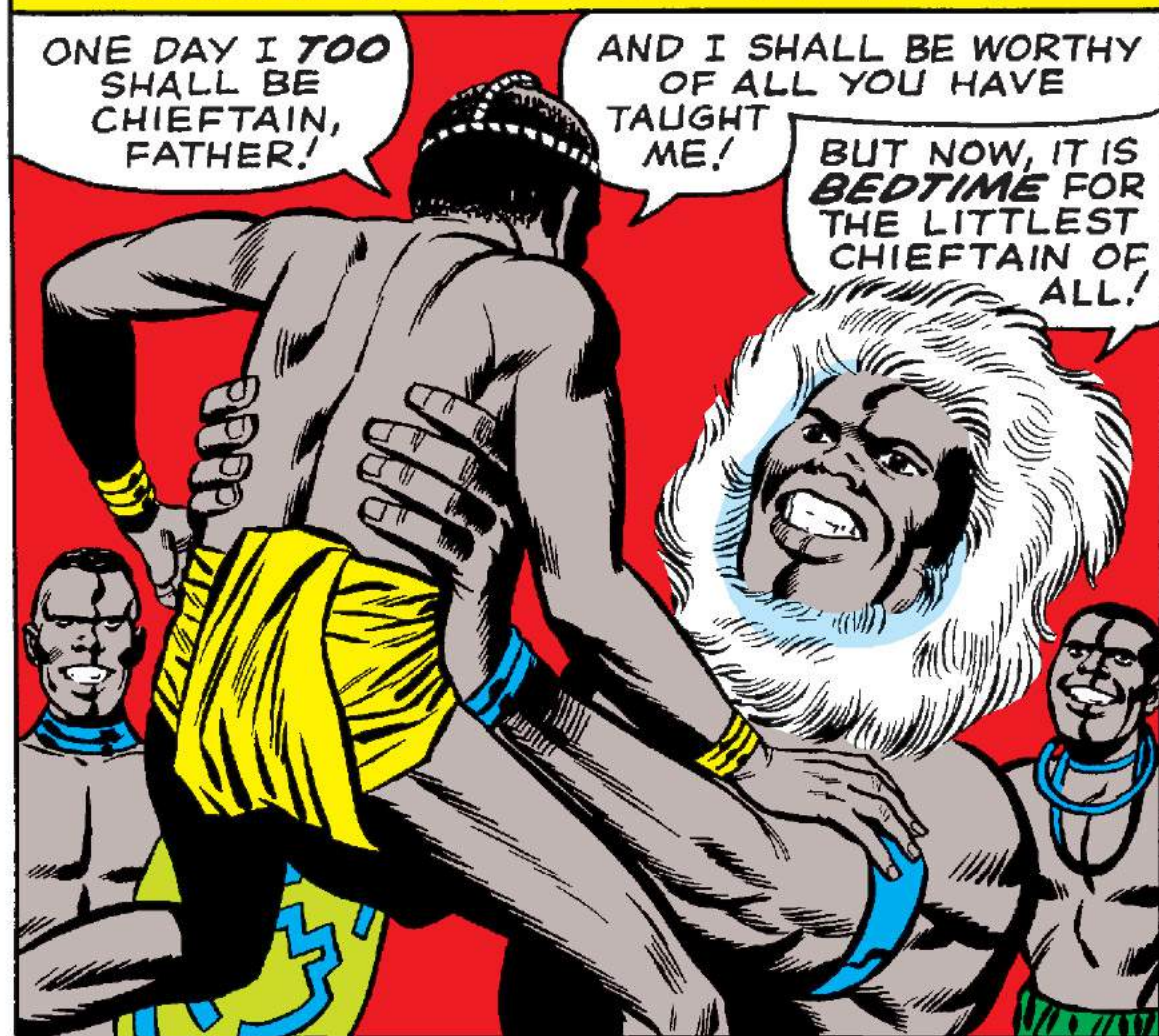
ALL
HAIL
T'CHAKA--
GUARDIAN
OF THE
ETERNAL
PEAK!

"MY FATHER WAS THE GREATEST CHIEFTAIN OF ALL!
WISE IN COUNCIL--JUST IN JUDGEMENT--AND BRAVE
IN BATTLE!"



"WHEREVER THERE WAS
DANGER, THERE TOO
WAS **T'CHAKA**--ALWAYS
IN THE FOREFRONT--!"

"TO ME, HE WAS MORE THAN FATHER--MORE THAN
WARRIOR--TO ME, HE WAS LIKE A **GOD**!"



ONE DAY I TOO
SHALL BE
CHIEFTAIN,
FATHER!

AND I SHALL BE WORTHY
OF ALL YOU HAVE
TAUGHT
ME!

BUT NOW, IT IS
BEDTIME FOR
THE LITTLEST
CHIEFTAIN OF
ALL!



LOOK, KIDDO--WHY
DON'TCHA SAVE YER-
SELF THE TROUBLE?
I KNOW THE REST
BY HEART! EVERY-
THING WUZ HUNKY
DORY UNTIL THE
GREEDY IVORY HUNTERS
MADE THE SCENE!

BEN! FOR THE **LAST** TIME, WILL
YOU REMEMBER THAT WE'RE HIS
GUESTS?!

DO NOT BE CON-
CERNED, REED RICHARDS!
I REALIZE MY TALE MAY
SOUND CONTRIVED TO
YOU!

YOU AINT
JUST WHISTLIN'
WATUSI, PAL!



YER TALKIN' TO A GUY
WHO SEEN EVERY
TARZAN MOVIE AT LEAST
A DOZEN TIMES, AND I
CAN RECITE YA HALF'A
THE **BOMBA, THE JUNGLE**
BOY BOOKS BY HEART!

SO YER LITTLE BEDTIME
STORY AINT IMPRESSIN'
ME! LET'S GIT TO THE
PUNCHLINE, HUH?

THAT'S
ENOUGH,
BEN!



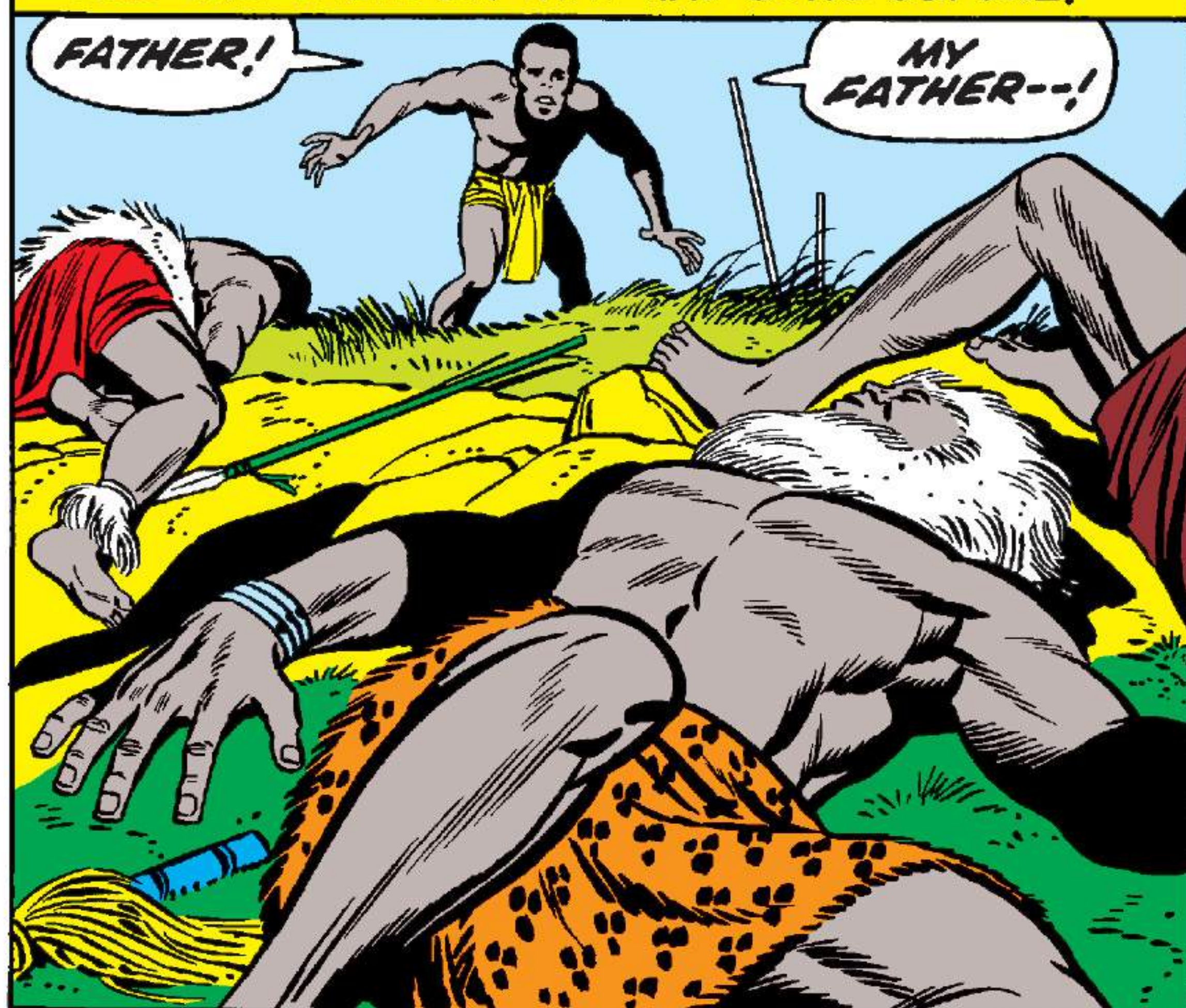
"I, WHO HAD LIVED IN THE JUNGLE SINCE BIRTH, HAD NEVER SEEN SUCH VIOLENCE AS I BEHELD THAT MOMENT--WHILE THE MACHINE-GUN FIRE OF KLAU FELL UPON OUR WARRIORS WITHOUT MERCY--!"



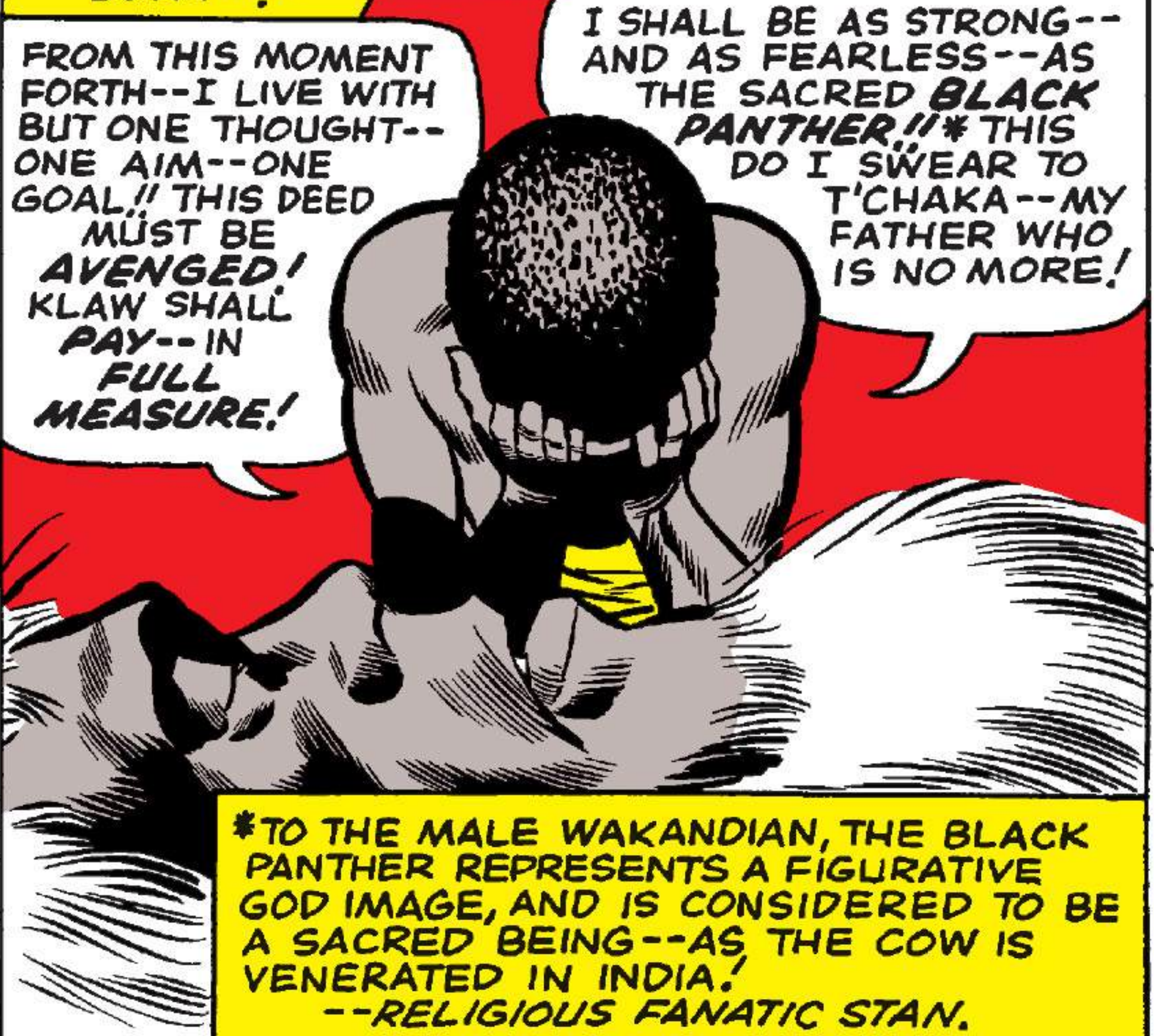
"BUT, OVER THE NOISE OF THE GUNFIRE--ONE SOUND KEPT ROARING IN MY ANGUISHED BRAIN--THE SOUND OF A NAME-- A NAME I WOULD HATE FOR ALL ETERNITY--! THE NAME OF--KLAU!"



"SECONDS LATER, THE FIRING HAD CEASED--BUT, THE DEADLY SILENCE WHICH FOLLOWED WAS MORE DEAFENING--MORE FRAUGHT WITH DREAD--THAN ALL THE THUNDER THAT HAD GONE BEFORE!"



"IN THAT SPLIT-SECOND, MY BOYHOOD ENDED--AS THE NEW CHIEFTAIN OF ALL THE WAKANDAS WAS BORN--!"



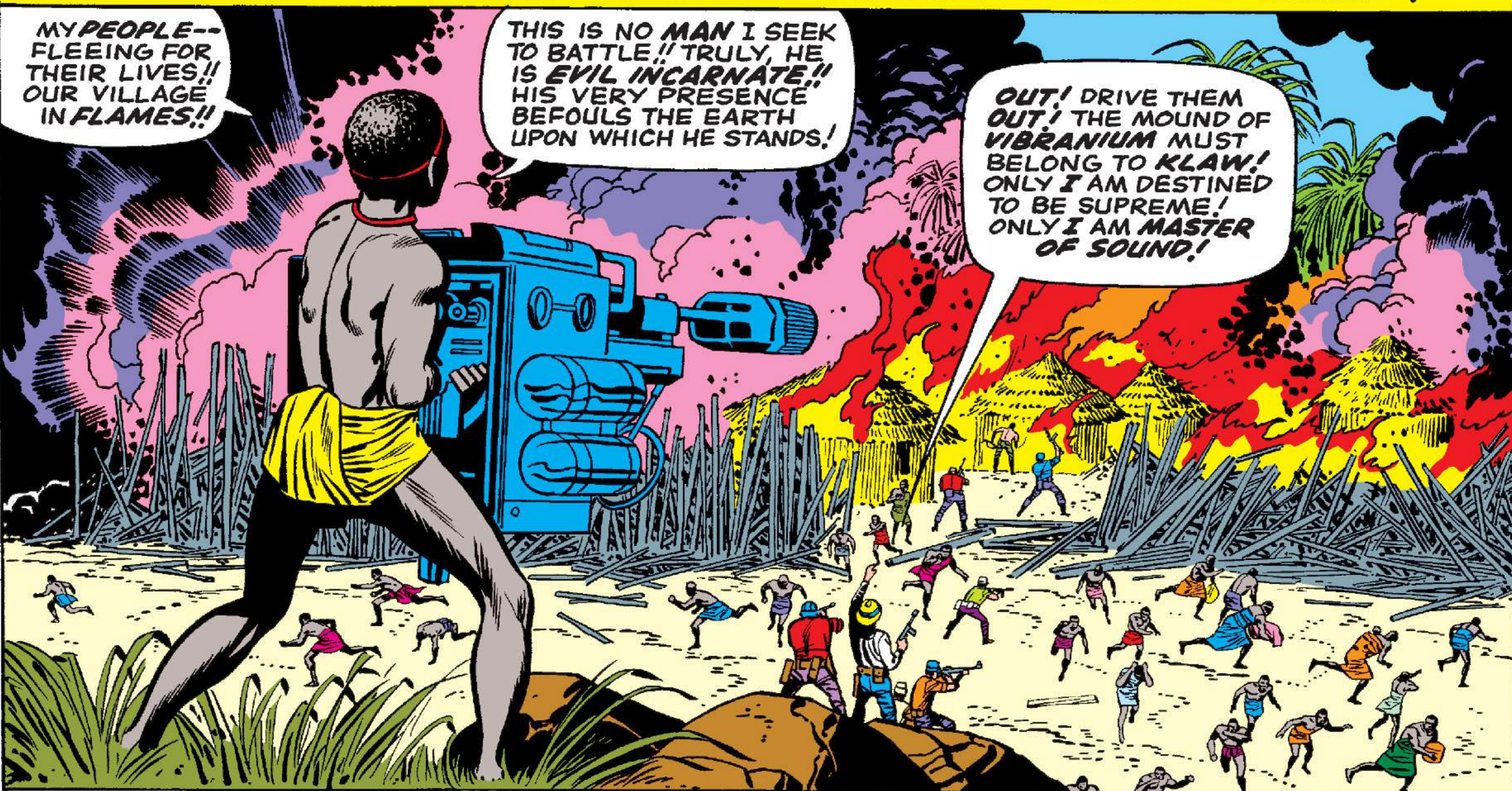
"SUDDENLY, I HEARD THE SOUND OF A MAN MUTTERING BEHIND ME. SILENTLY, WITH A SEETHING RAGE IN MY HEART, I TURNED--"



"THERE! THE FIRST BLOW HAS BEEN STRUCK AGAINST KLAU! THE FIRST OF MANY THAT SHALL ENDLESSLY FOLLOW, UNTIL HE HAS BEEN COMPLETELY DESTROYED!"



"FINDING THE STRANGE WEAPON SURPRISINGLY LIGHT IN WEIGHT, I LIFTED IT, CARRYING IT WITH ME, UNTIL I REACHED THE GATES OF OUR VILLAGE, WHERE MY EYES BEHELD KLAU'S FINAL ACT OF VILLAINY--!"



MY PEOPLE--
FLEEING FOR
THEIR LIVES!!
OUR VILLAGE
IN FLAMES!!

THIS IS NO MAN I SEEK
TO BATTLE!! TRULY, HE
IS **EVIL INCARNATE!!**
HIS VERY PRESENCE
BEFOULS THE EARTH
UPON WHICH HE STANDS!

OUT! DRIVE THEM
OUT! THE MOUND OF
VIBRANIUM MUST
BELONG TO **KLAU**!
ONLY I AM DESTINED
TO BE SUPREME!
ONLY I AM **MASTER
OF SOUND!**

"WITHOUT CONSCIOUS THOUGHT, I AIMED THE FEAR-SOME OBJECT IN MY ARMS DIRECTLY AHEAD OF ME --WHILE MY FINGER BEGAN TO TIGHTEN ON THE TRIGGER, AS I CRIED--"



YOU HAVE SLAIN MY FATHER!
YOU HAVE PUT THE TORCH
TO OUR VILLAGE!
AND NOW YOU
MUST **PAY--!**

THE **SOUND
BLASTER!!**
HE'S ABOUT
TO FIRE IT!

**STOP
HIM!** HE
DOESN'T
KNOW
WHAT HE'S
DOING--!!



**TOO LATE! HE
DETONATED
IT!**

IT WAS AN **ACCIDENT!** HE
DOESN'T EVEN KNOW
HOW
TO AIM IT! THE SHOT FELL
SHORT!

I'LL MAKE
SURE HE
GETS **NO
SECOND
CHANCE!**

YOU LITTLE **FOOL!** YOU CANNOT REALIZE THE **FORCES** YOU ARE TAMPERING WITH! THE DEVICE YOU HOLD CONVERTS **SOUND** INTO PURE **ENERGY!** IN THE WRONG HANDS, IT CAN WREAK UNMENTION-ABLE **HAVOC!!**



YOURS ARE THE HANDS
THAT ARE WRONG, EVIL
ONE--NOT **MINE!**

**LOOK OUT! HE'S
GONNA FIRE
AGAIN!**

THE LITTLE
SAVAGE
WOULDN'T
DARE!

I SEE YOU
STARTING TO
SQUEEZE YOUR
TRIGGER! BUT,
YOU ARE **TOO
LATE--!**



THIS IS
FOR **T'CHAKA--**
THE
WARRIOR
KING!

MY
HAND!

RUN, KLAU--RUN! IT'S CERTAIN DEATH TO REMAIN HERE--WHILE HE HOLDS THE SOUND BLASTER!

BUT--THE VIBRANIUM!! I CAN'T GO WITHOUT THE VIBRANIUM--!!

YOU'LL HAVE TO! WE'RE NOT STAYING TO DIG IT UP FOR YOU! WE WANNA LIVE!

YOU'VE SHATTERED MY HAND--LOST ME MY MEN--BUT I'LL RETURN! THE VIBRANIUM WILL YET BE MINE!

THAT WAS TEN YEARS AGO--TO THE DAY!

I COULD NOT THEN PURSUE HIM, FOR THE SHOCK OF FIRING THOSE TWO MIGHTY BURSTS HAD DRAINED MY YOUTHFUL STRENGTH!

BUT, I KNOW HE WILL RETURN--I CAN SENSE THAT THE TIME HAS COME!

Y'KNOW--THAT STORY'S JUST PLAIN NUTTY ENUFF TO BE TRUE!

AND THIS TIME--I SHALL BE READY!

IT IS TRUE! I SOLD SMALL PORTIONS OF VIBRANIUM TO VARIOUS SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATIONS, ENABLING ME TO AMASS A FORTUNE--THE EQUAL OF ANY ON EARTH!

SO THAT'S HOW YA COULD AFFORD THAT FAR-OUT MECHANIZED JUNGLE OF YOURS!

THAT? I JUST DID IT FOR A LARK!

IT WAS A SIMPLE EXERCISE, TO TEST MY SKILL--FOR I HAD ATTENDED THE FINE UNIVERSITIES OF BOTH HEMISPHERES!

HOW ABOUT YER PANTHER POWER--THE WAY YA SEE IN THE DARK, 'N STUFF--!

A SECRET--HANDED DOWN FROM CHIEFTAIN TO CHIEFTAIN!

WE EAT CERTAIN HERBS--AND UNDERGO RIGOROUS RITUALS--OF WHICH I AM FORBIDDEN TO SPEAK!

BUT, WHY THE HECK DIDJA TRY TO TRAP US?!!

I HAD TO! YOU FOUR WERE THE SUPREME TEST!

IF I COULD FIGHT YOU TO A STANDSTILL, THEN I AM READY FOR--KLAU!

ALTHOUGH HE HAS KEPT HIDDEN FROM ME ALL THESE YEARS, I KNOW HE IS PLANNING TO--

WAIT!!

IT HAS COME! THE LONG AWAITED, CRITICAL DANGER SIGNAL!!

WHEEE WHEEE WHEEE WHEEE WHEEE

CLICK

NOW WHAT?

WOTTA DEAL! YA MOVE ONE OF THEM CRAZY PANTHER STATUES, AND THE WHOLE BLASTED WALL SLIDES BACK!

QUIET! THIS SENSASCOPE IS RECORDING THE APPROACH OF A NAMELESS MENACE--FROM THE DIRECTION OF OUR SACRED MOUND!

KLAU HAS RETURNED!

AND, JUST A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY, LUMBERING AWESOMELY INTO WAKANDA TERRITORY, WE SEE--

A GIGANTIC CRIMSON GORILLA! THE FORCE CANNON-- FIRE IT! FIRE!!

IT IS PREDICTED THAT KLAU, THE SOUND MASTER, WILL RETURN THIS DAY! BUT SUCH A SIGHT AS THIS--NONE COULD HAVE EXPECTED!

WE MUST STAND FAST WHILE WE MAY! THE BLACK PANTHER WILL BE HERE WITHIN MINUTES!

WHAT IS AMISS? WHY DOES THE FORCE GUN NOT STOP HIM--??

WHOOOM!

EVEN AS THE FORCE BOLT STRIKES HIM, HE SEEMS TO BE GATHERING ITS ENERGY WITHIN HIS BODY--AND NOW--IT-IT IS NOT POSSIBLE--!

--HE TOOK THE FULL IMPACT OF THE BLOW--AND HURLS IT BACK AT US!

HE HAS DEMOLISHED OUR ADVANCE OUTPOST--WITH OUR OWN WEAPON!

WE DON'T KNOW WHAT'S UP, PANTHER--BUT IT'LL BE MORE FUN FIGHTING WITH YOU THAN AGAINST YOU!

FLAME ON!

I'VE COME THIS FAR WITH THE F.F.--I MIGHT AS WELL GO ALL THE WAY!

THERE IS NO NEED FOR YOU TO SHARE THE DANGER! THIS IS A BATTLE FOR THE SON OF T'CHAKA!

HENCE, I SHALL DON MY RITUALISTIC GARB, AS THE BLACK PANTHER STALKS AGAIN!

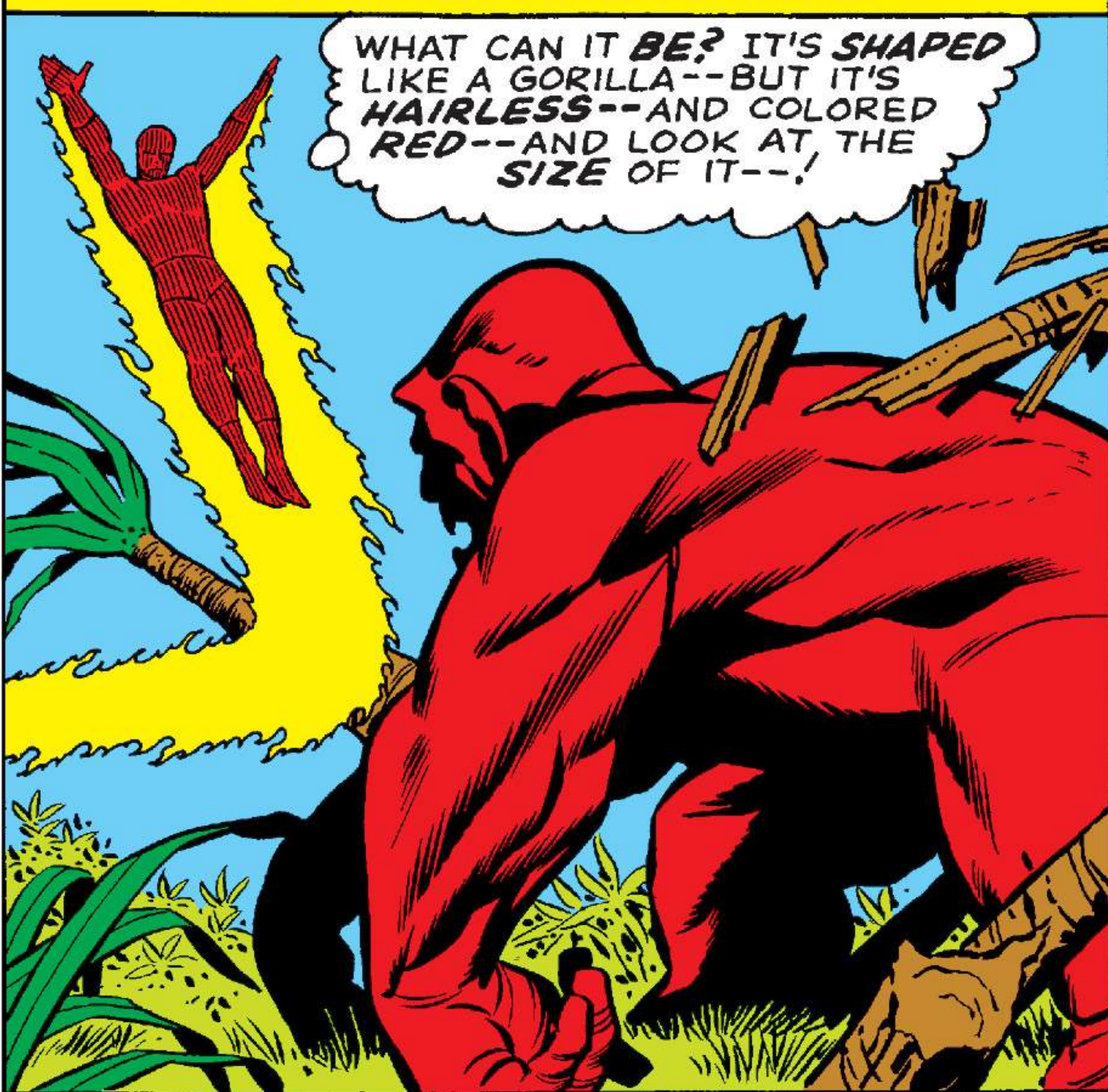
IF EVERYONE ELSE CAN BE A CORNBALL, SO CAN I!

IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!

A LITTLE ACTION WILL BE GOOD FOR JOHNNY--TO STOP HIM FROM BROODING OVER CRYSTAL!

WAIT FOR ME, REED! WHATEVER IS OUT THERE--WE'LL FACE IT TOGETHER!

SECONDS LATER, AS THE TORCH IS FIRST TO REACH THE GIGANTIC CRIMSON MONSTER--



WHAT CAN IT **BE?** IT'S SHAPED LIKE A GORILLA--BUT IT'S **HAIRLESS--** AND COLORED **RED--** AND LOOK AT THE **SIZE OF IT--!**

BUT THEN, SUDDENLY, THE FIERY YOUTH COMES TO A STARTLING REALIZATION--

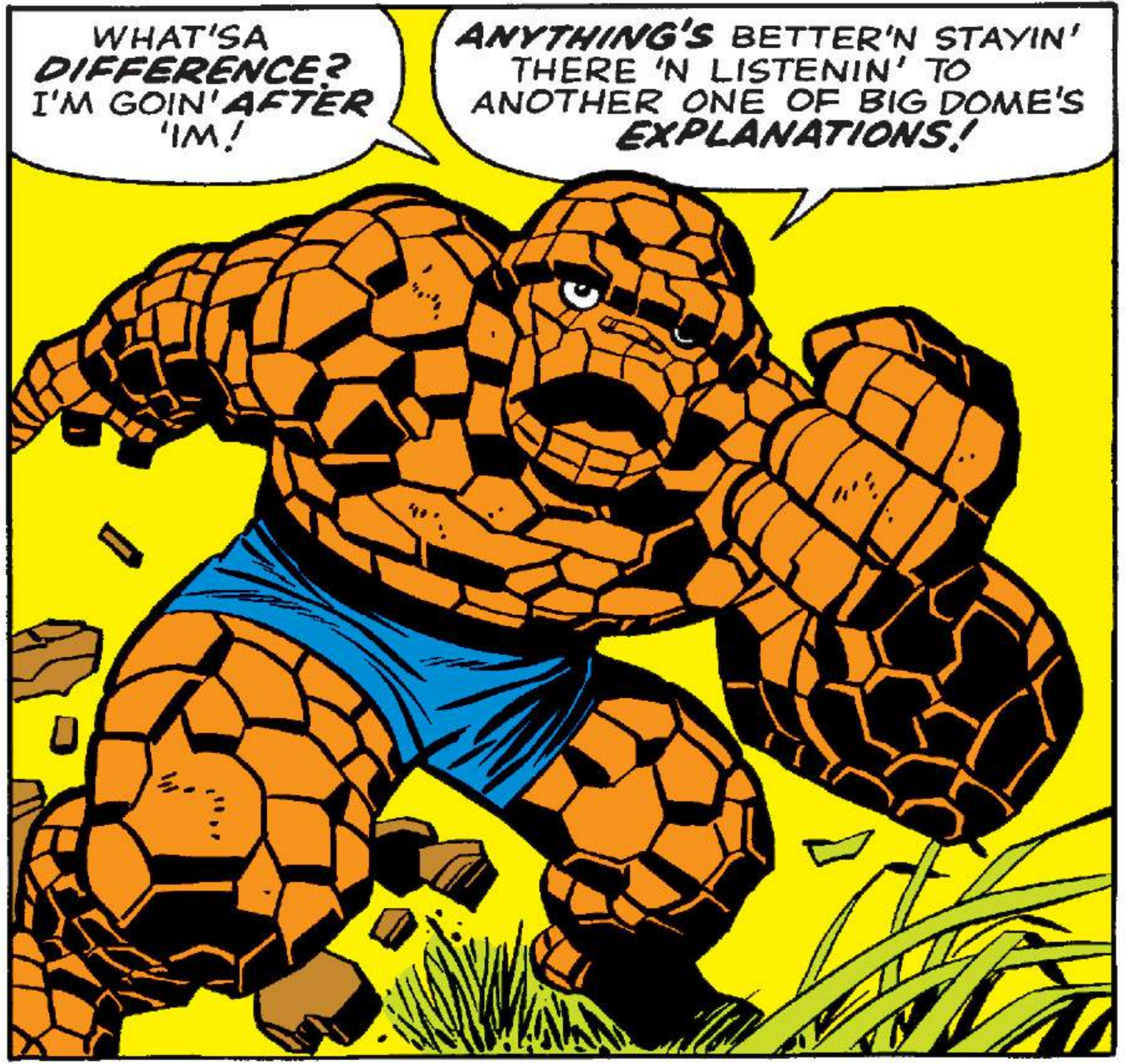


HE **SEEMS** ALIVE--BUT HE **ISN'T!** HE **CAN'T** BE!
EVERY BEAST THAT LIVES FEARS MY **FLAME**--BUT HE DOESN'T!

AT THAT MOMENT...



LOOKA **THAT, STRETCH!** THEY MUST BE FILMIN' A NEW **KING KONG!**
BUT WHO EVER HEARD OF A **RED, HAIRLESS GORILLA?**
IT'S **NOT** A GORILLA, BEN! IT'S SOMETHING FAR MORE **DANGEROUS!**
WHAT DARLING? WHAT **IS** IT??

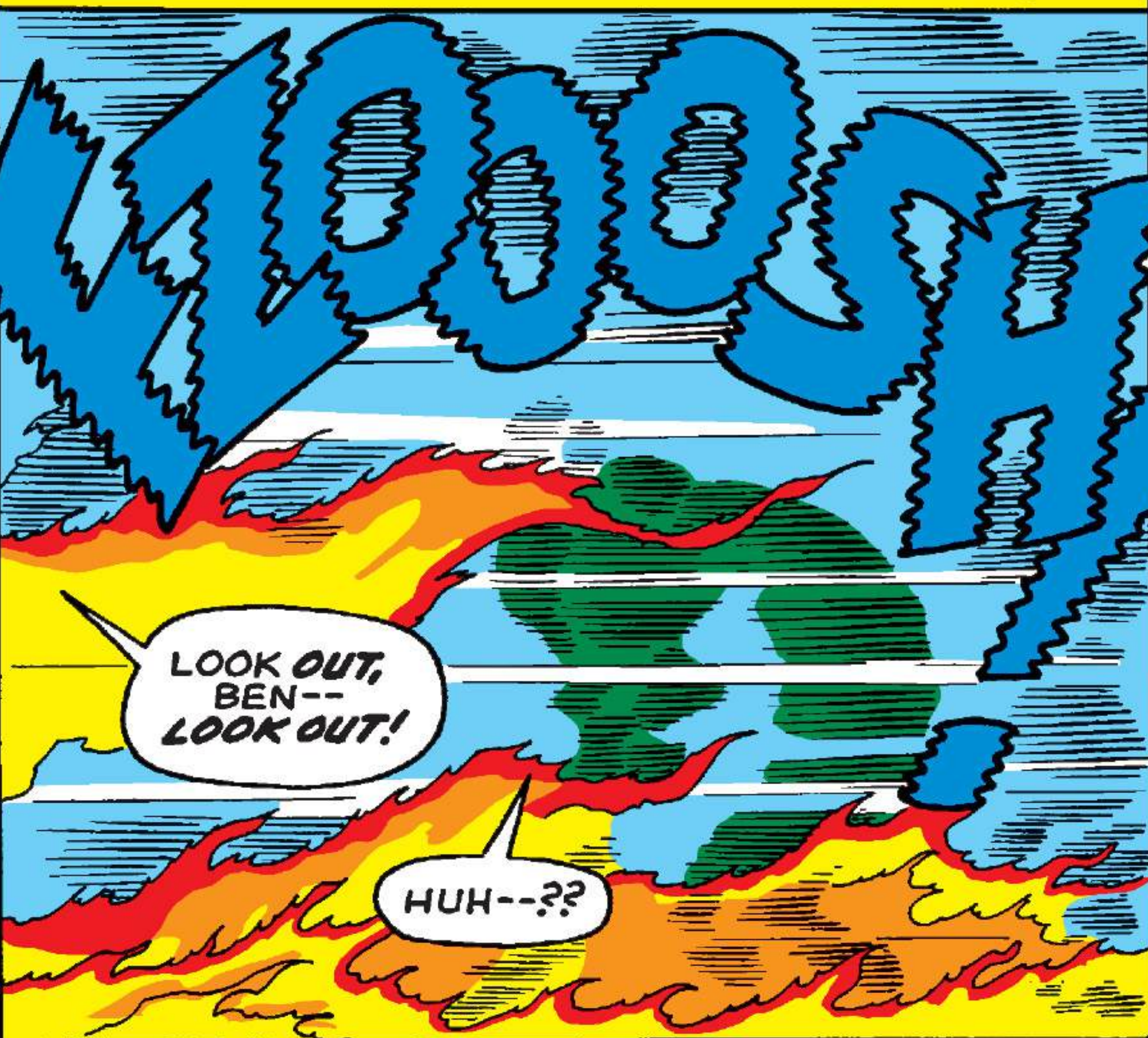


WHAT'S A **DIFFERENCE?** I'M GOIN' AFTER 'IM!
ANYTHING'S BETTER'N STAYIN' THERE 'N LISTENIN' TO ANOTHER ONE OF BIG DOME'S **EXPLANATIONS!**



BEN--**STAY BACK!** YOU CAN'T HURT HIM! LOOK HOW HE IGNORES MY **FLAME!**
FLAME, SHMAME! NOW WE'LL SEE IF HE CAN IGNORE A FISTFUL O' **KNUCKLES!**
NOBODY'S MAKIN' AN ACCORDION OUTTA MY LITTLE BUDDY!
I GOTTA MOVE **FAST!** NO TELLIN' WHAT HE MIGHT DO TO THE KID!

BUT, EVEN BEFORE THE ONRUSHING BATTLER CAN GET WITHIN STRIKING RANGE OF THE TOWERING CREATURE, THE TORCH'S OWN HEAT IS SUDDENLY MAGNIFIED, AND HURLED BACK AT THE STARTLED THING--!

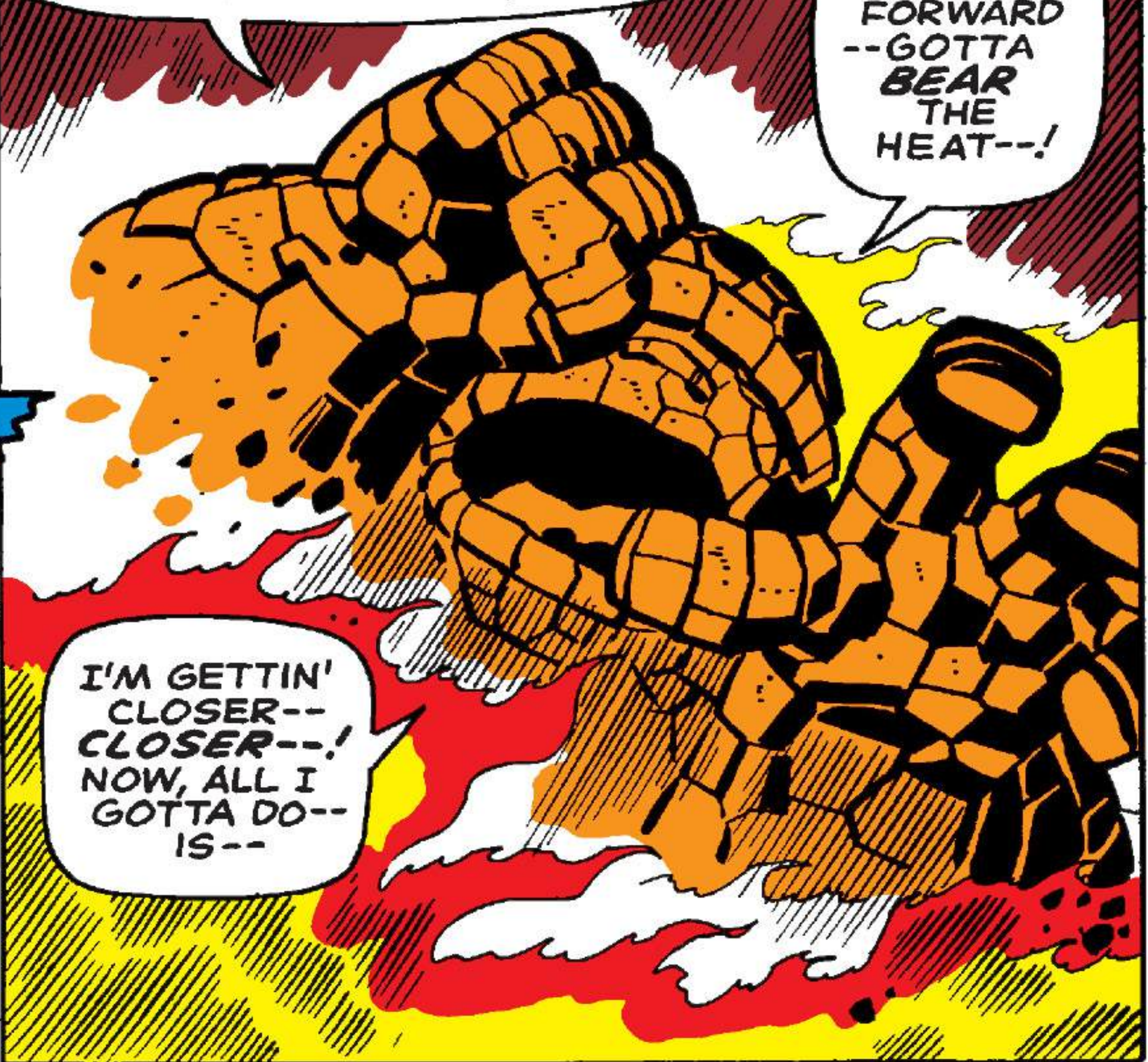


LOOK OUT, BEN--
LOOK OUT!

HUH--??

GETTIN' HOTTER EVERY SECOND!! BUT--CAN'T FALL BACK NOW! THE TORCH NEEDS ME! HE NEEDS ME--!

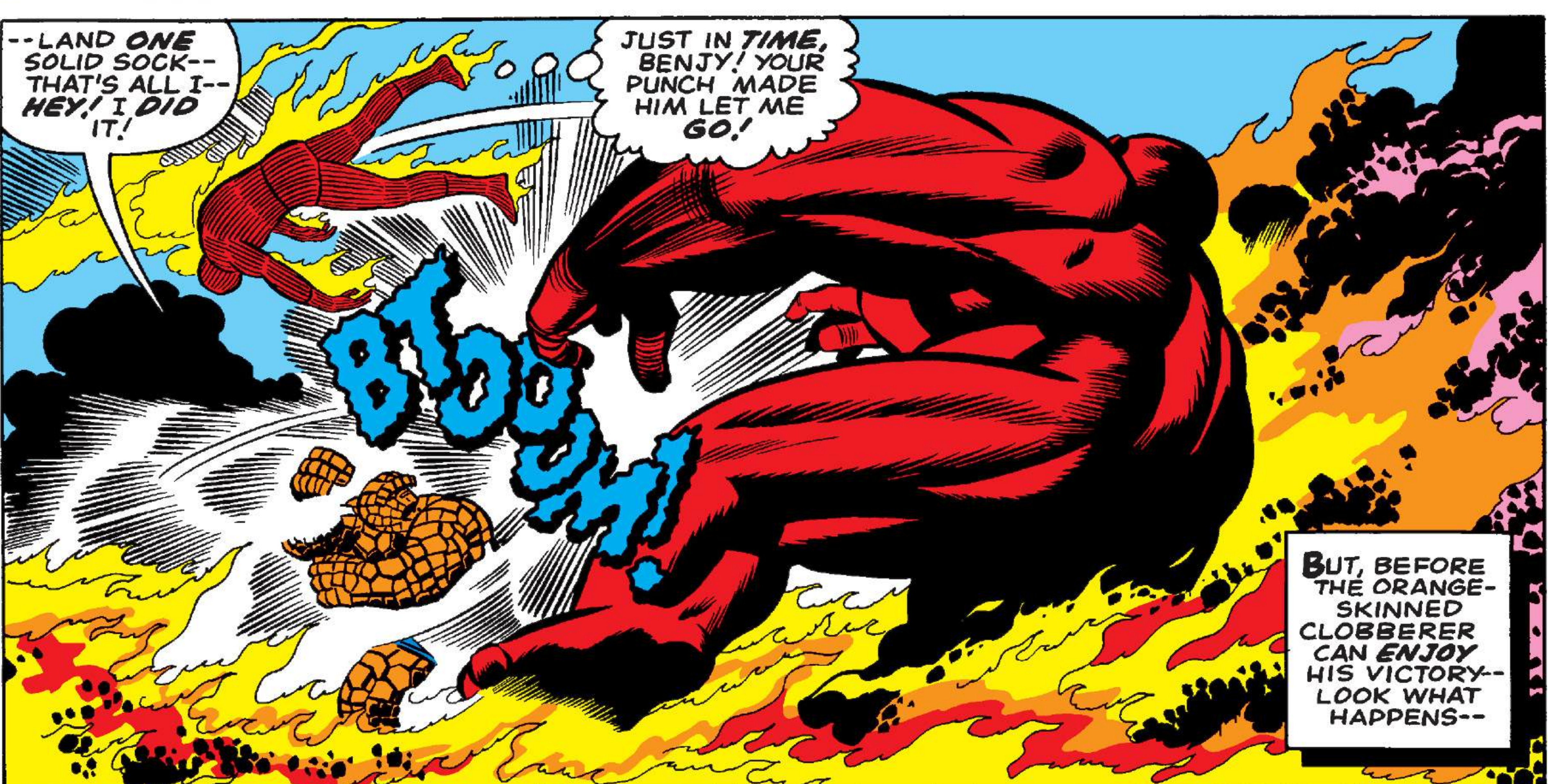
GOTTA KEEP MOVIN' FORWARD--GOTTA BEAR THE HEAT--!



I'M GETTIN' CLOSER--CLOSER--! NOW, ALL I GOTTA DO--IS--

--LAND ONE SOLID SOCK-- THAT'S ALL I--HEY! I DID IT!

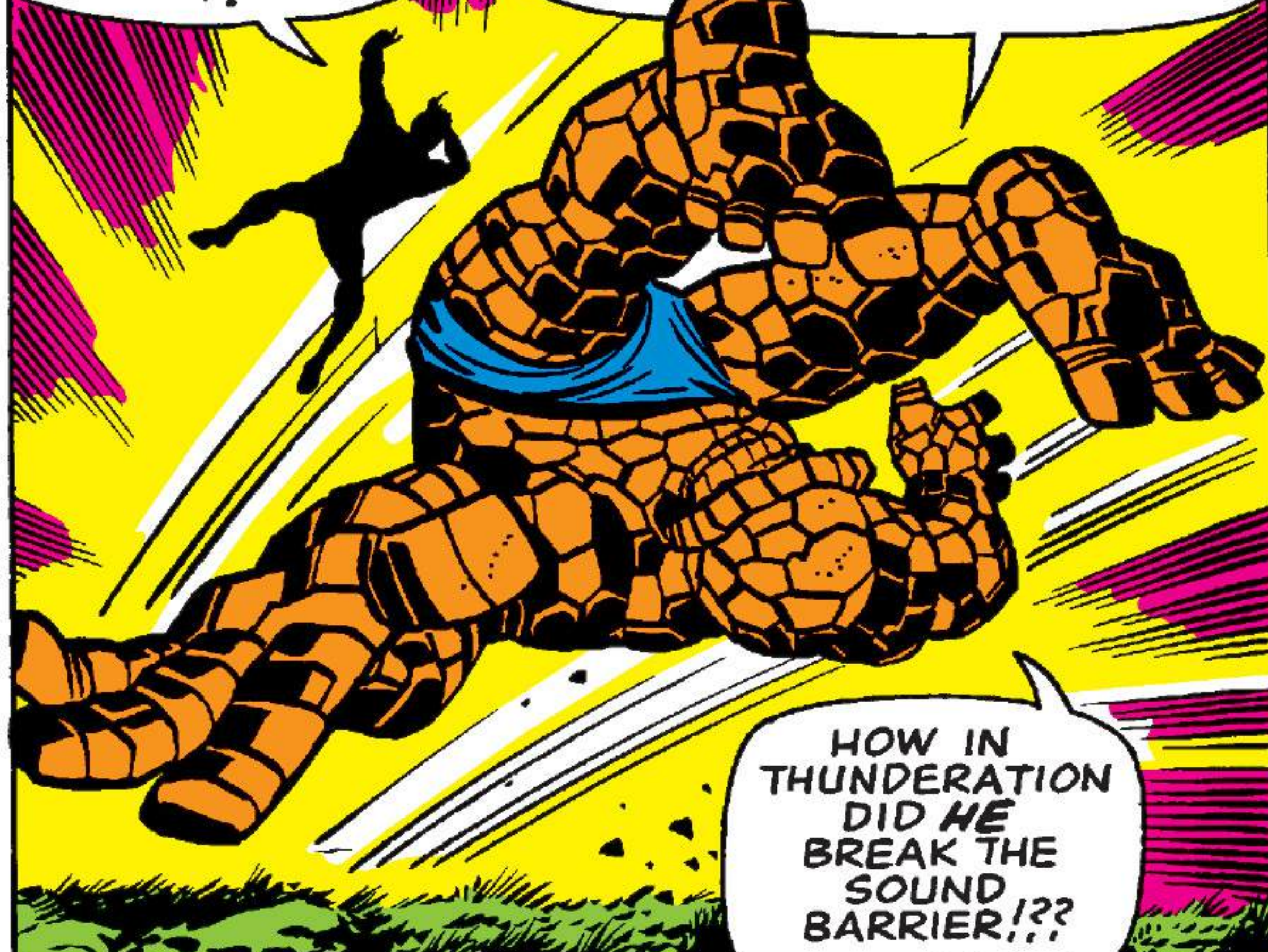
JUST IN TIME, BENJY! YOUR PUNCH MADE HIM LET ME GO!



BUT, BEFORE THE ORANGE-SKINNED CLOBBERER CAN ENJOY HIS VICTORY--LOOK WHAT HAPPENS--

THAT NOISE!! IT ALMOST DEAFENED ME! WHA-WHAT WAS IT?

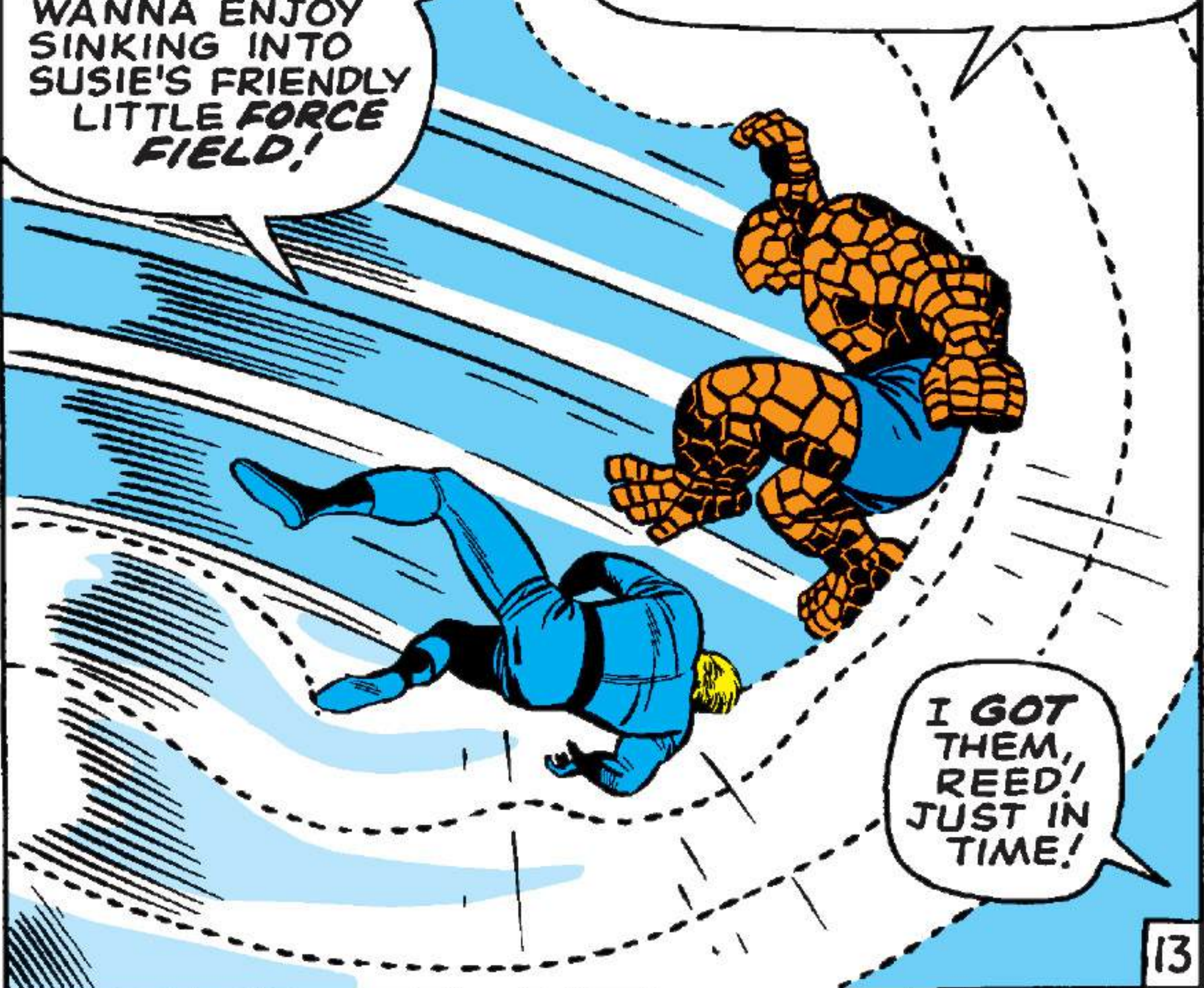
DON'TCHA KNOW A SONIC BOOM WHEN YA HEAR ONE, JUNIOR! BUT, I DON'T GET IT--IT CAME FROM THAT OVER-SIZE APE--!



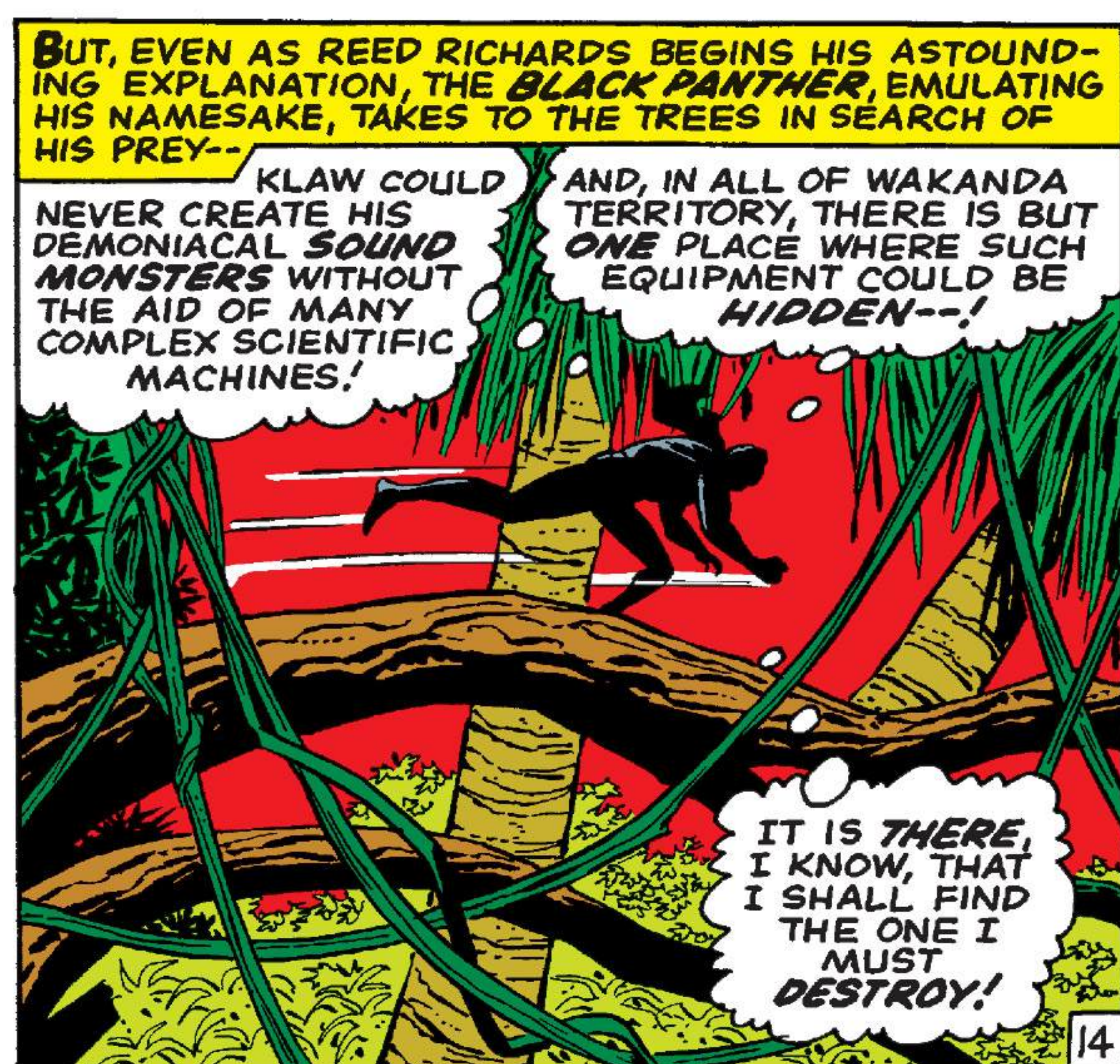
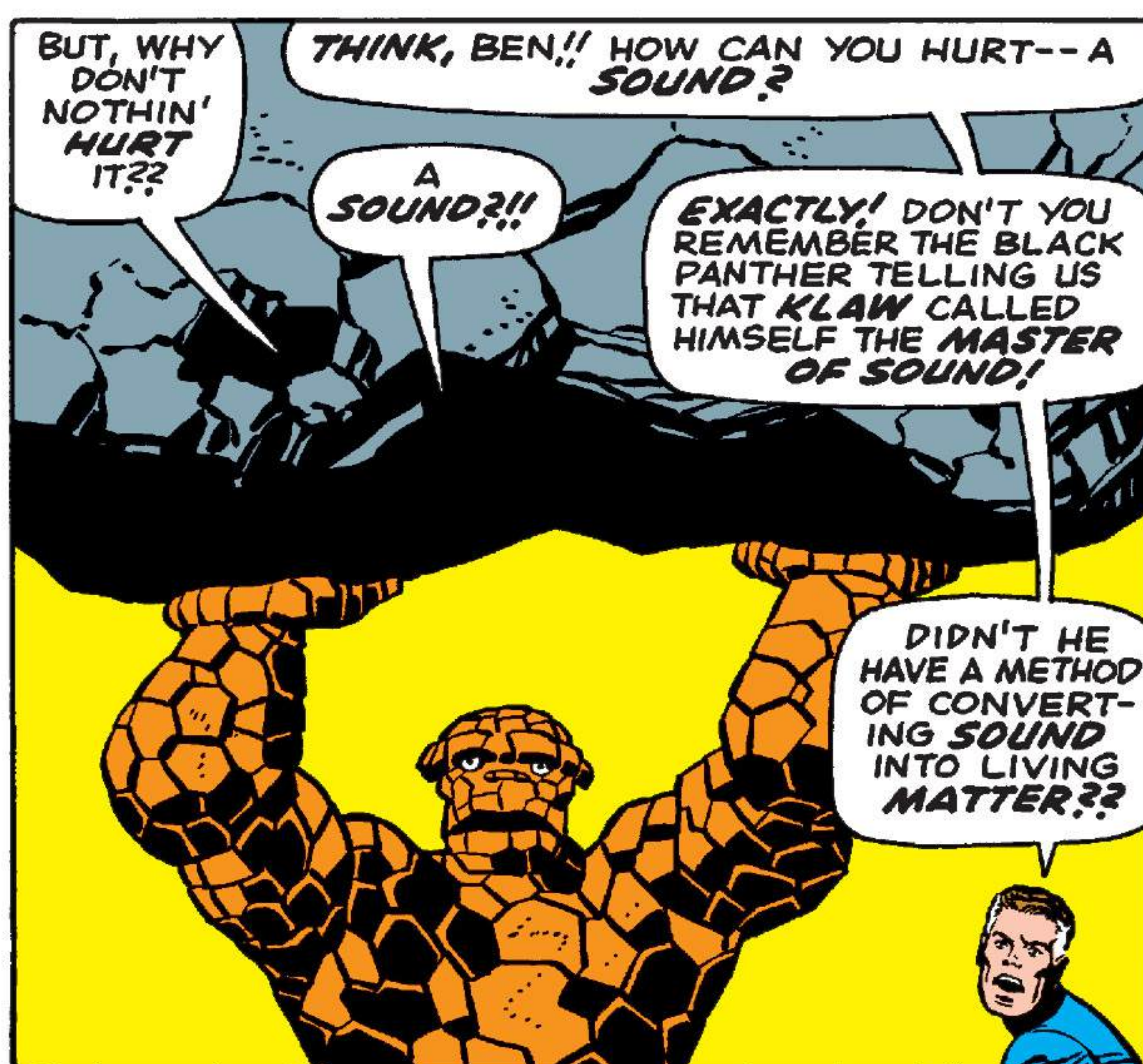
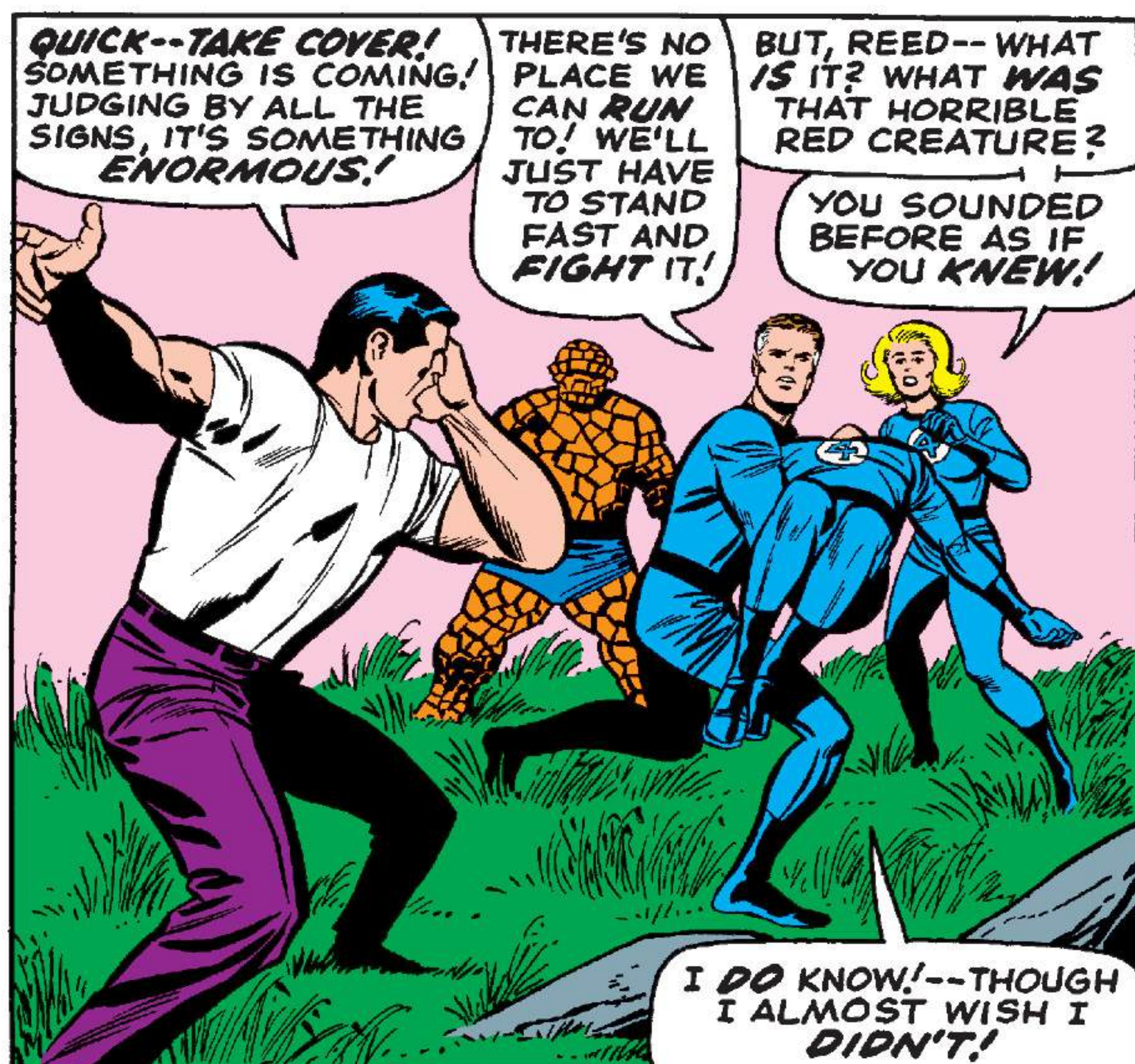
HOW IN THUNDERATION DID HE BREAK THE SOUND BARRIER,??

I'LL ANSWER YOU LATER, BIG BUDDY! RIGHT NOW, I WANNA ENJOY SINKING INTO SUSIE'S FRIENDLY LITTLE FORCE FIELD!

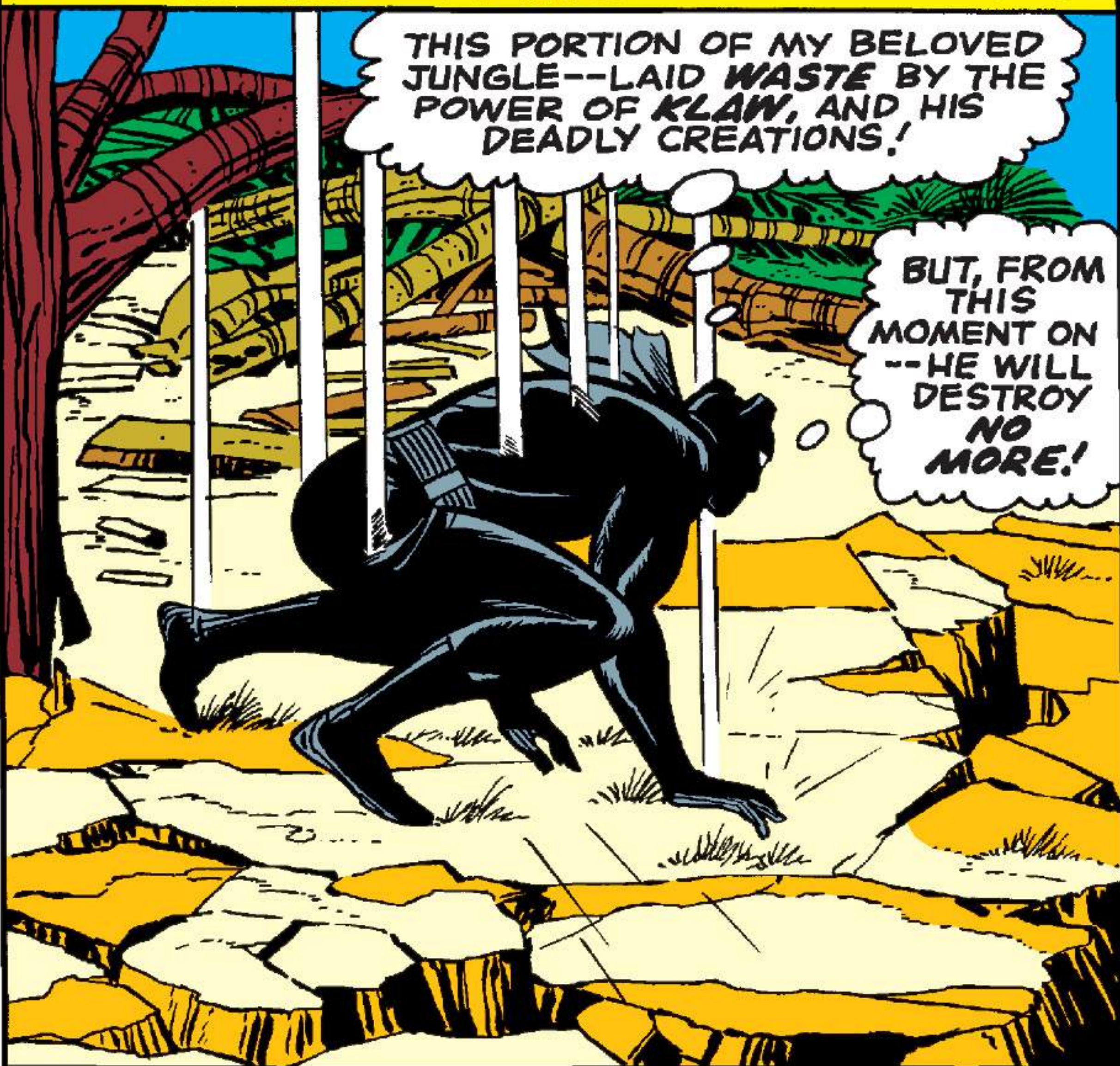
DIDJA EVER HAVE A FEELIN' YA GOT STUCK IN THE WRONG NIGHTMARE?



I GOT THEM, REED! JUST IN TIME!



SOFTLY, SILENTLY, THE BLACK PANTHER DROPS TO THE GROUND, A FEW MINUTES LATER--LANDING WITH THE GRACE AND EASE OF A TRUE FELINE--!



THIS PORTION OF MY BELOVED JUNGLE--LAID WASTE BY THE POWER OF KLAU, AND HIS DEADLY CREATIONS!

BUT, FROM THIS MOMENT ON--HE WILL DESTROY NO MORE!

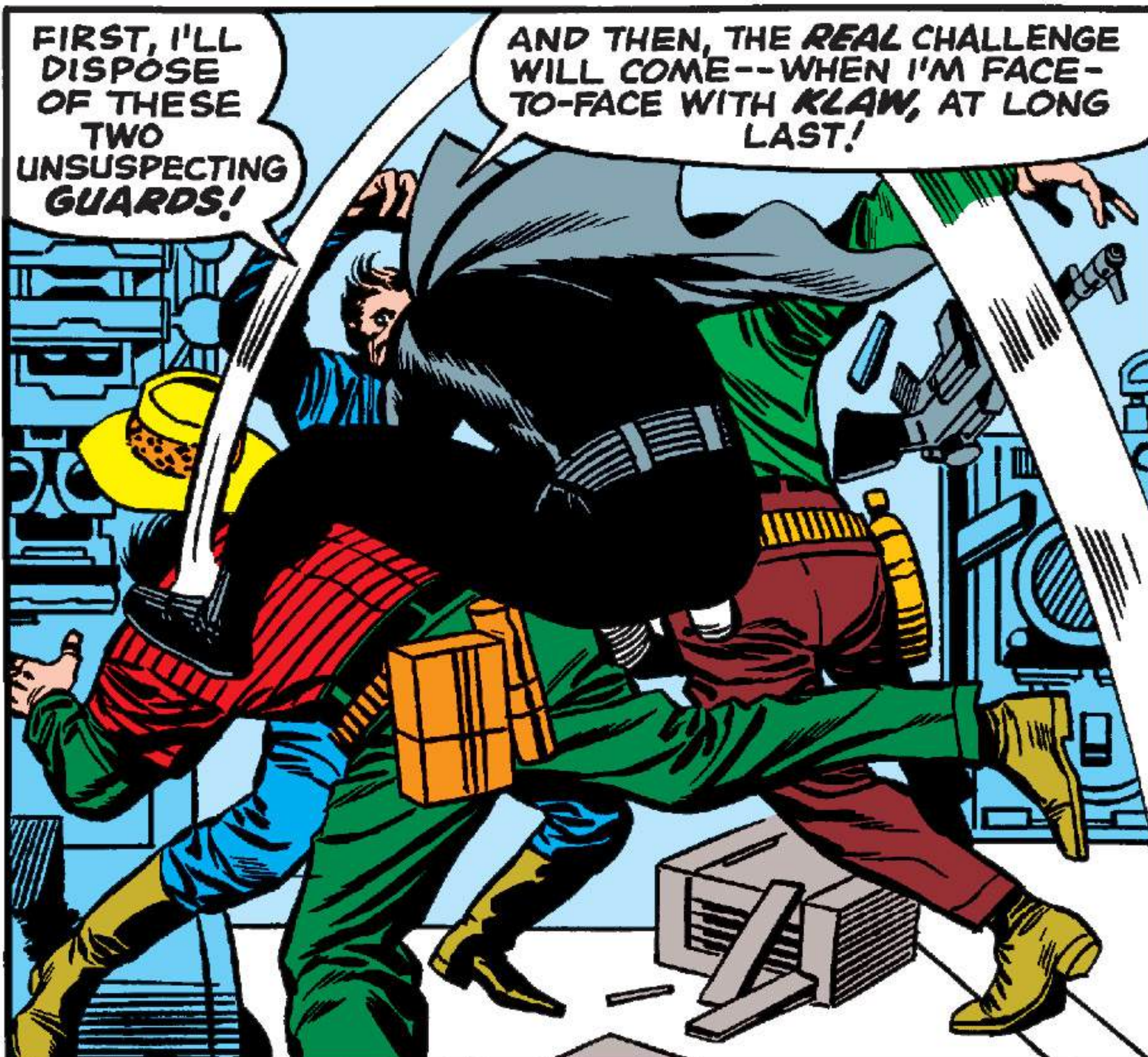
THIS HIDDEN CAVE--THE LARGEST IN WAKANDA--HE COULD SAFELY CONCEAL ANYTHING WITHIN ITS DEPTHS!

EVEN IN THE SHADOWS--EVEN IN THE GLOOM--HE IS UNMISTAKABLE! I HAVE FOUND MY QUARRY!



FIRST, I'LL DISPOSE OF THESE TWO UNSUSPECTING GUARDS!

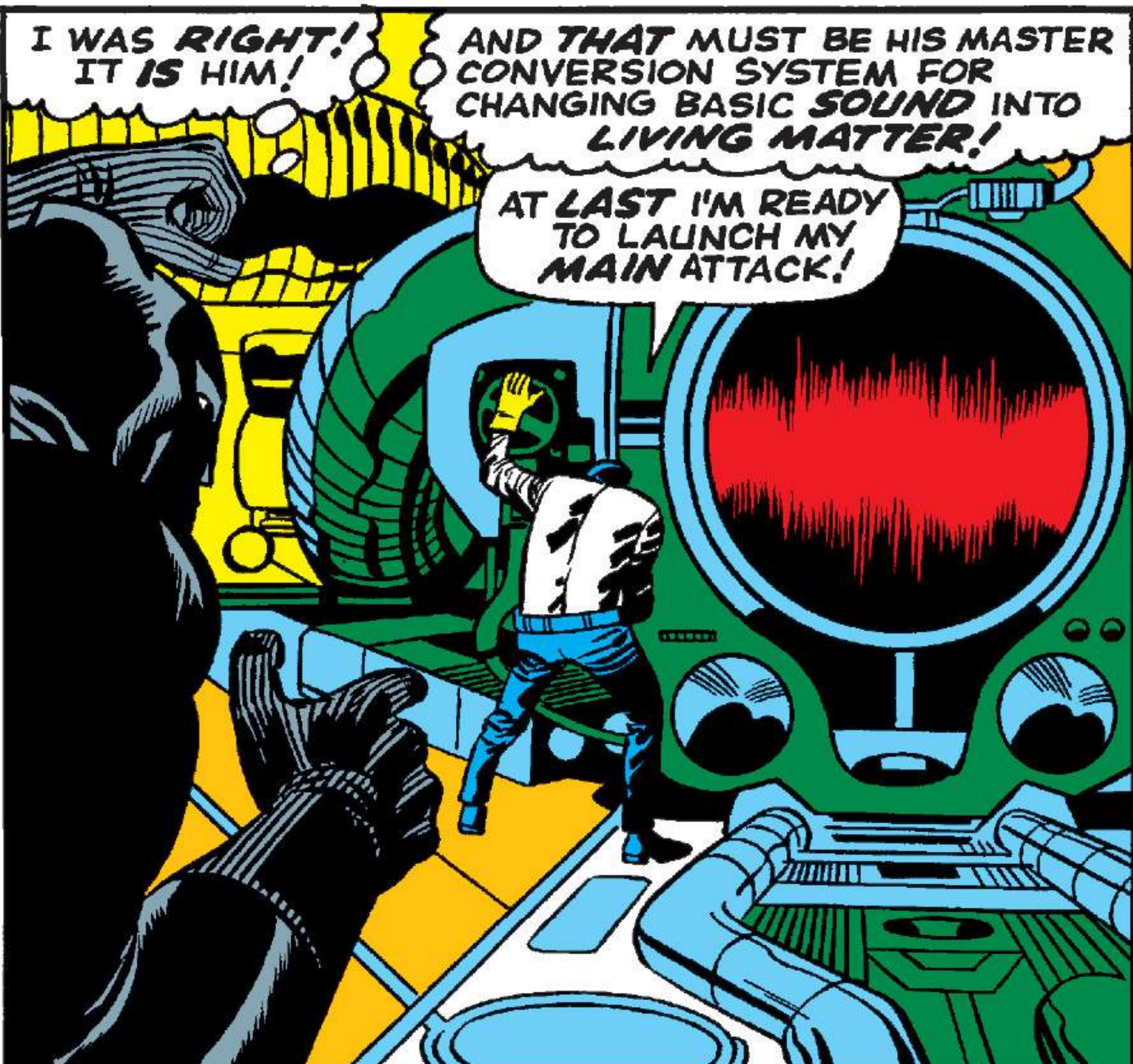
AND THEN, THE REAL CHALLENGE WILL COME--WHEN I'M FACE-TO-FACE WITH KLAU, AT LONG LAST!



I WAS RIGHT! IT IS HIM!

AND THAT MUST BE HIS MASTER CONVERSION SYSTEM FOR CHANGING BASIC SOUND INTO LIVING MATTER!

AT LAST I'M READY TO LAUNCH MY MAIN ATTACK!



FOR YOU, KLAU, THERE SHALL BE NO MORE ATTACKS! FOR YOU--THERE IS ONLY RETRIBUTION!

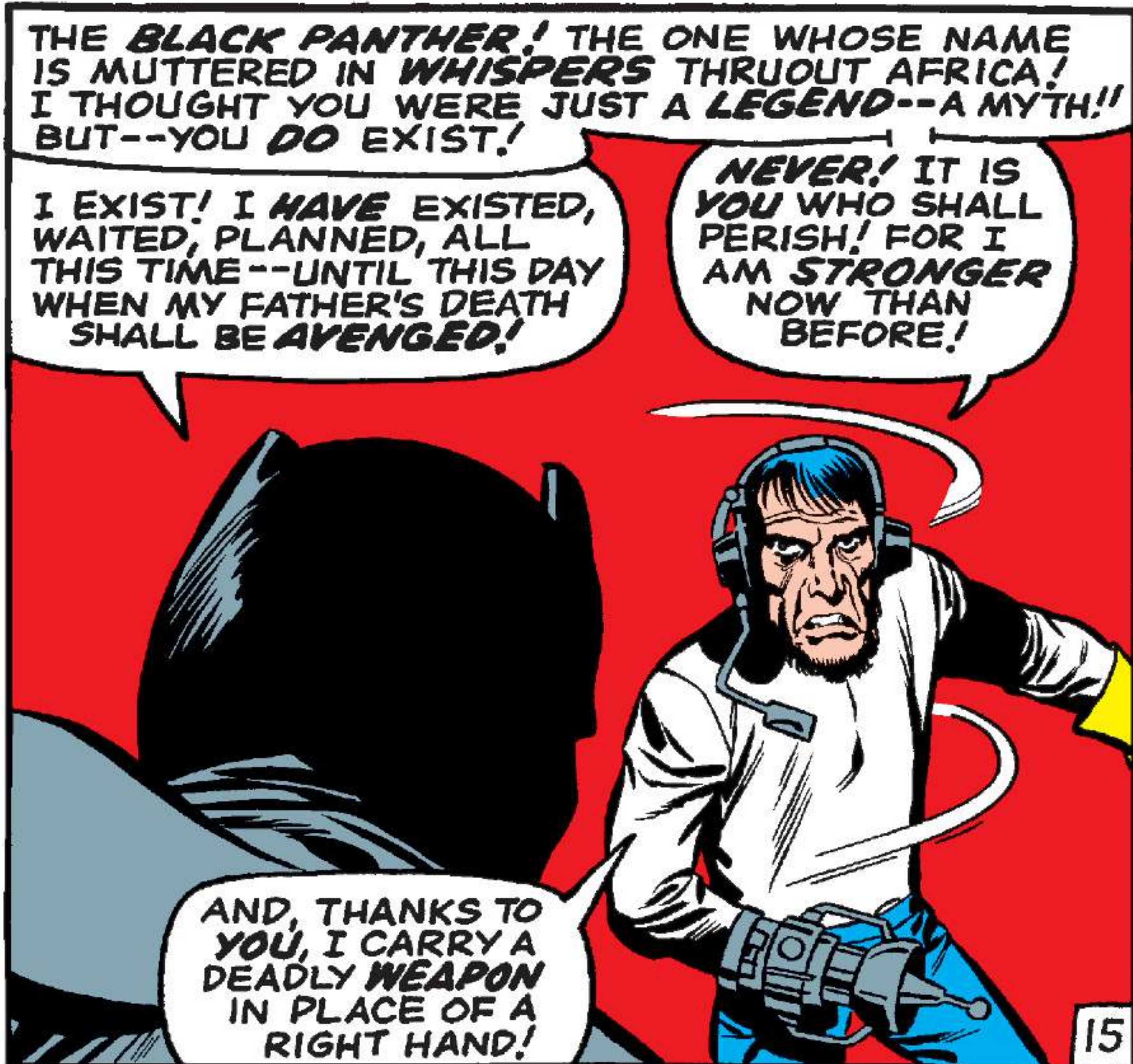
THAT VOICE!! I LAST HEARD ONE LIKE IT TEN YEARS AGO--BUT I CAN NEVER FORGET IT!



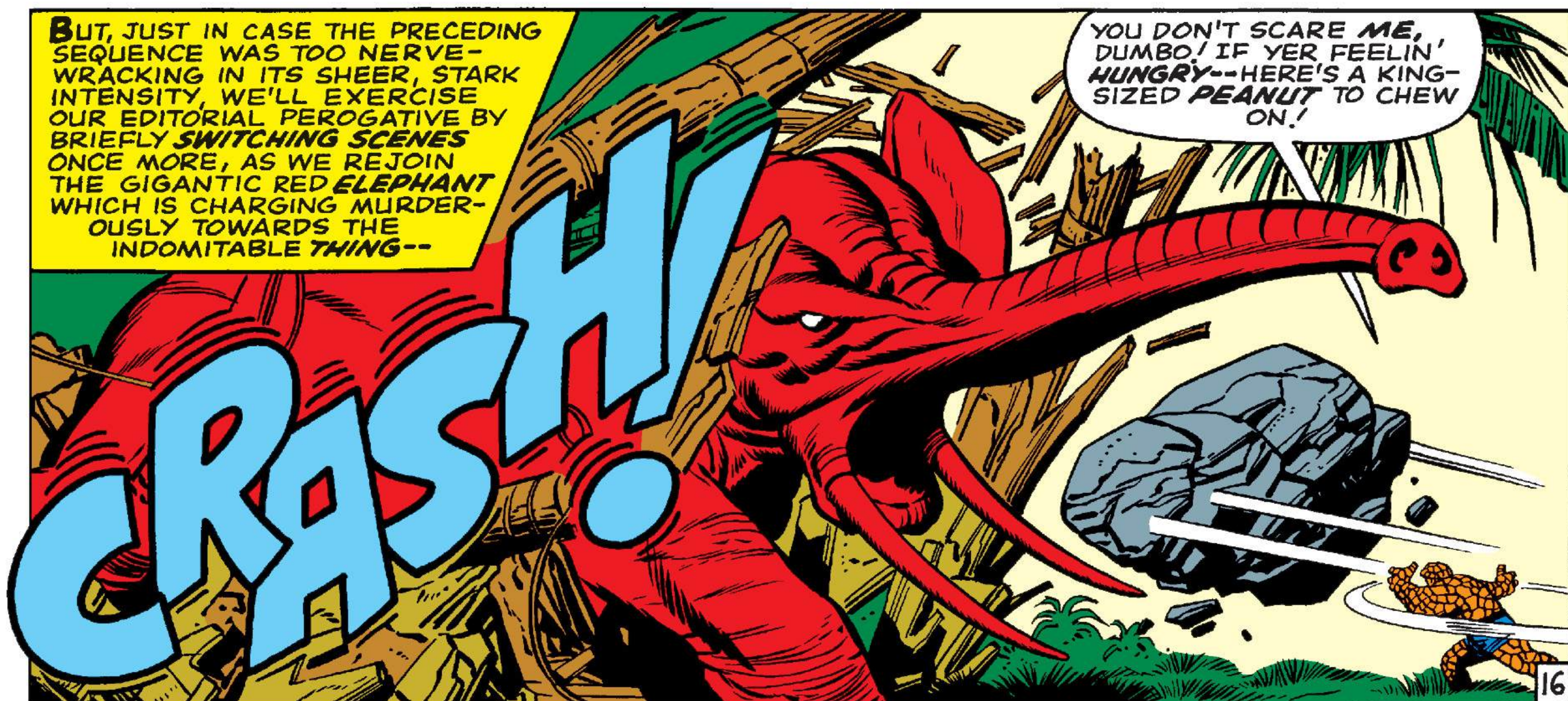
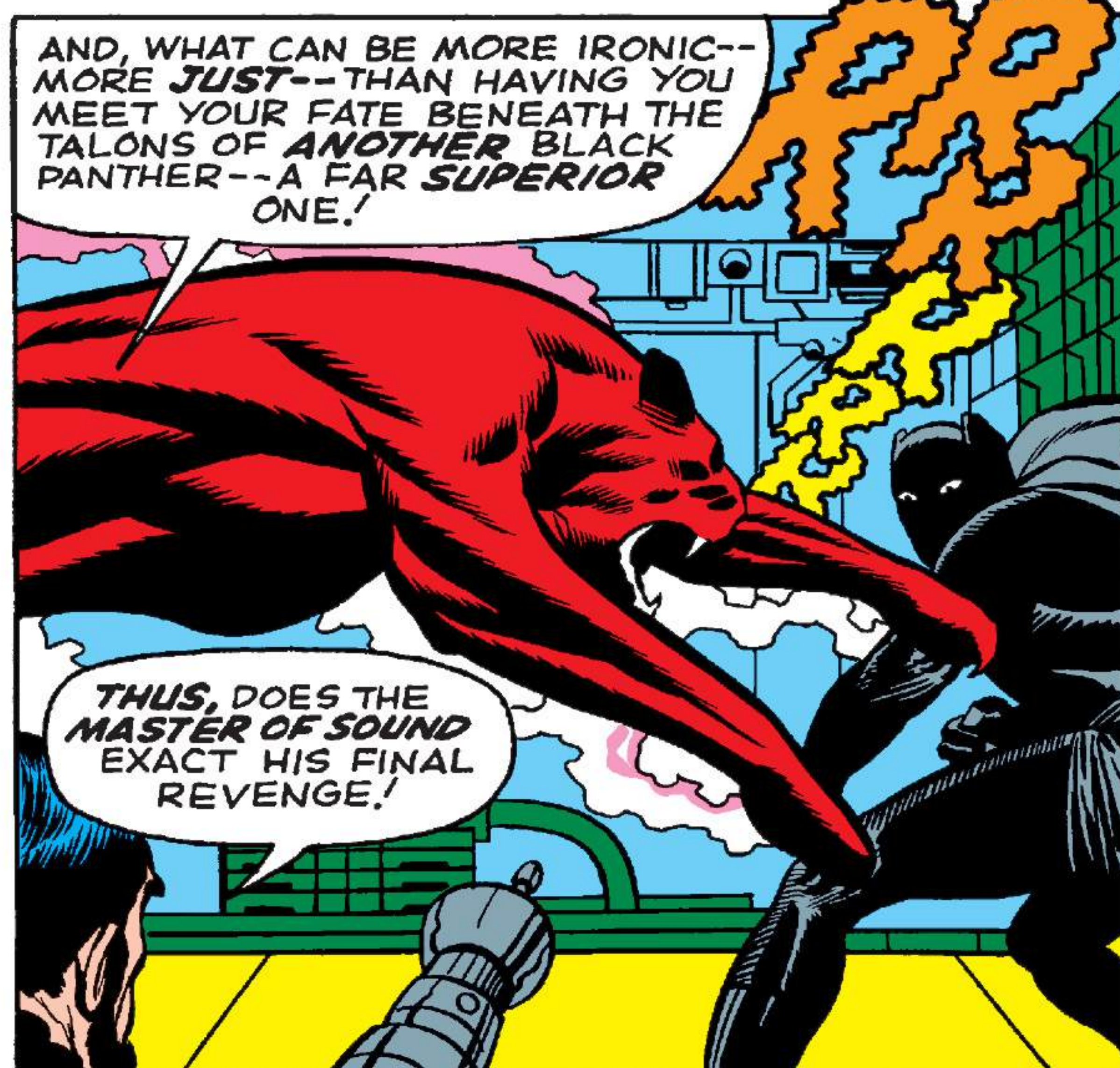
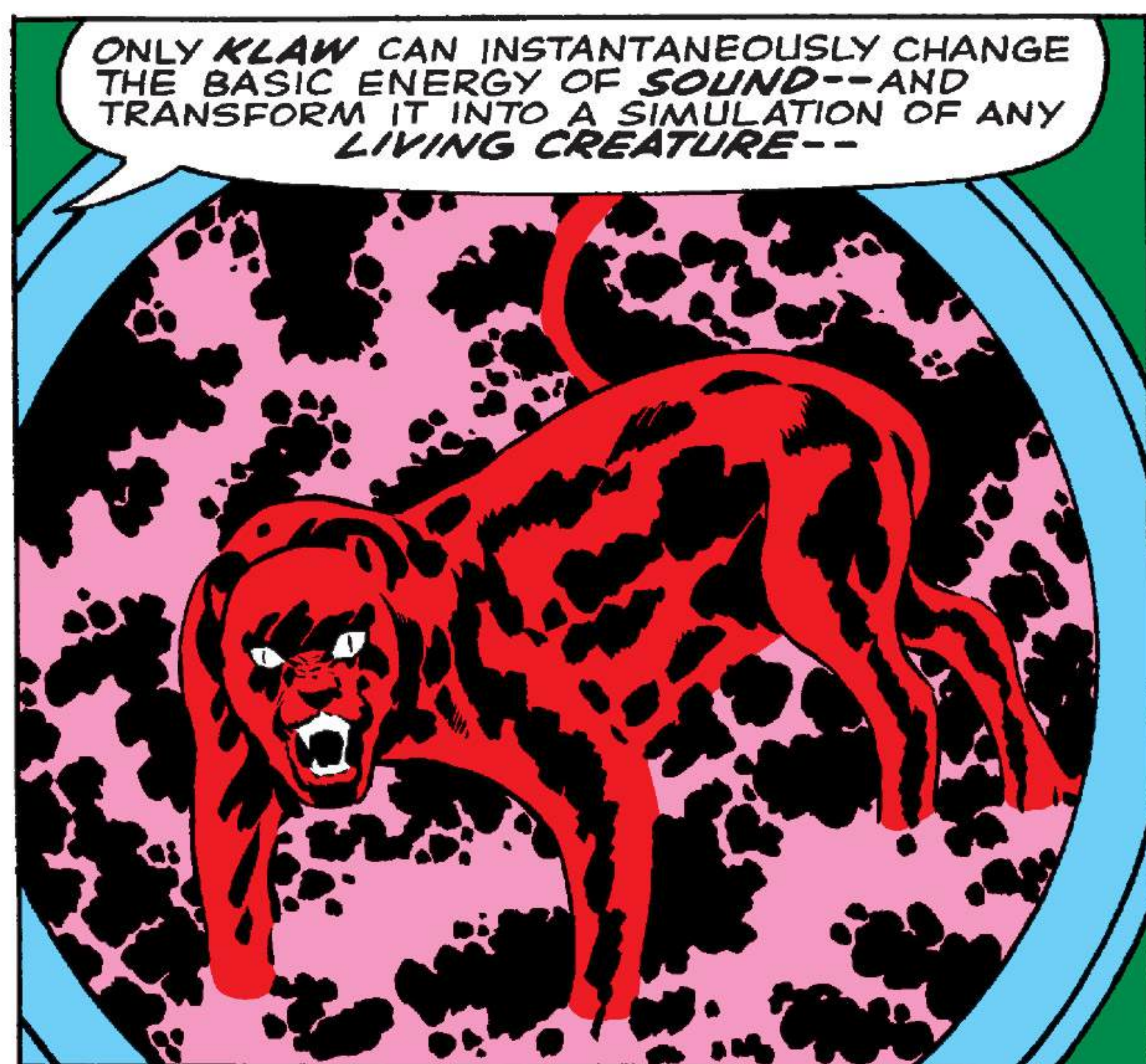
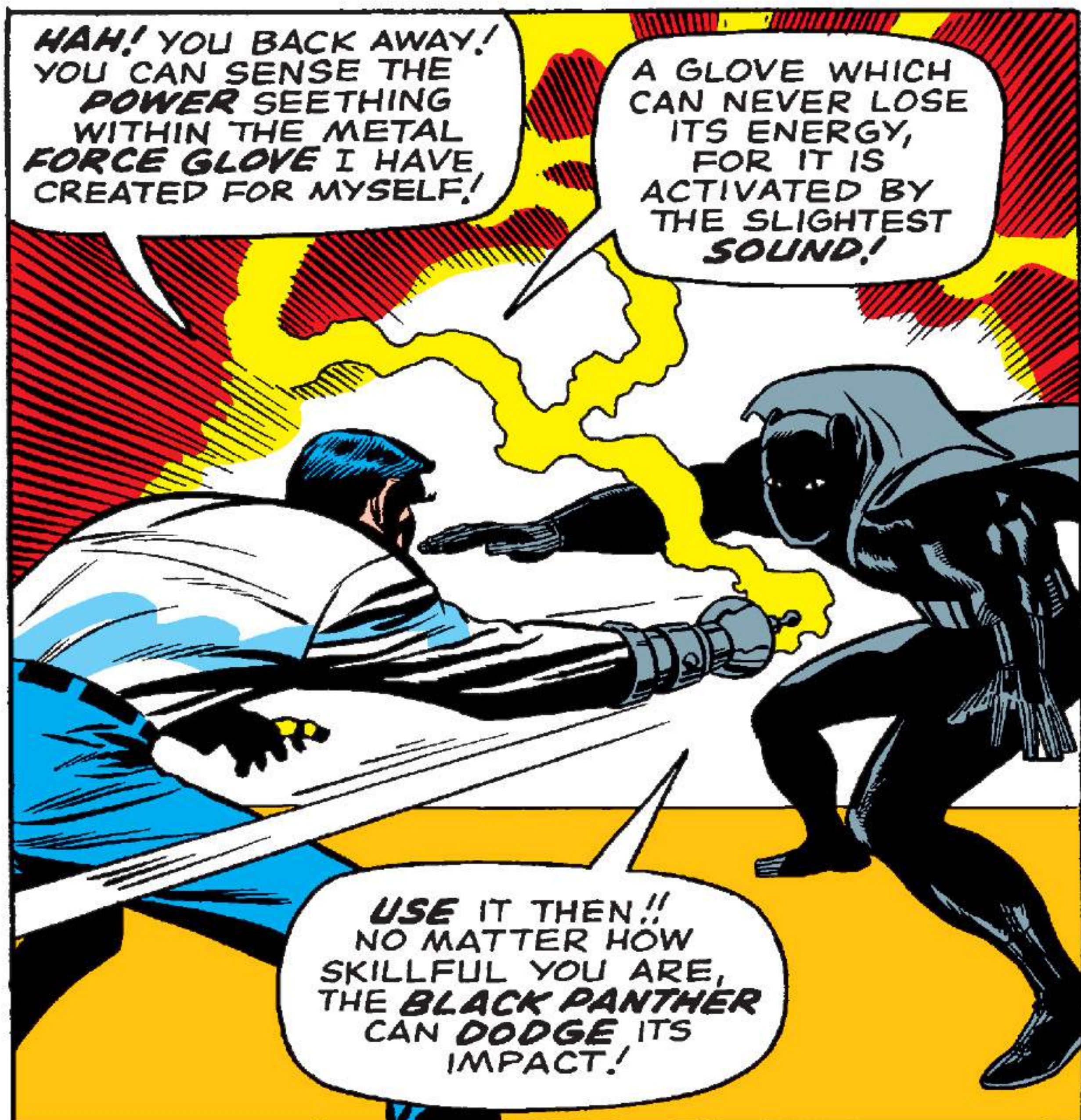
THE BLACK PANTHER! THE ONE WHOSE NAME IS MUTTERED IN WHISPERS THRUOUT AFRICA! I THOUGHT YOU WERE JUST A LEGEND--A MYTH!! BUT--YOU DO EXIST!

I EXIST! I HAVE EXISTED, WAITED, PLANNED, ALL THIS TIME--UNTIL THIS DAY WHEN MY FATHER'S DEATH SHALL BE AVENGED!

NEVER! IT IS YOU WHO SHALL PERISH! FOR I AM STRONGER NOW THAN BEFORE!



AND, THANKS TO YOU, I CARRY A DEADLY WEAPON IN PLACE OF A RIGHT HAND!

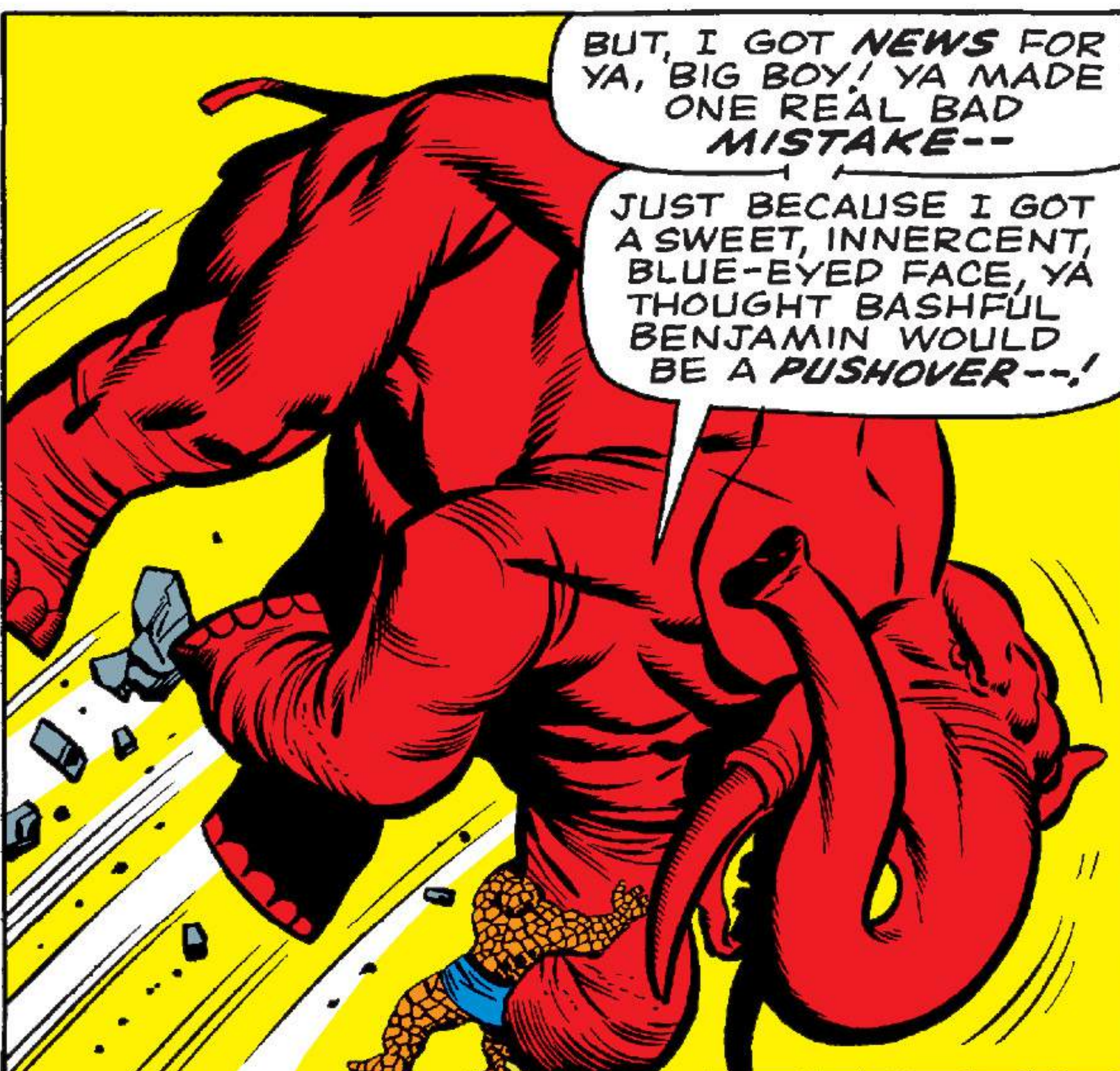
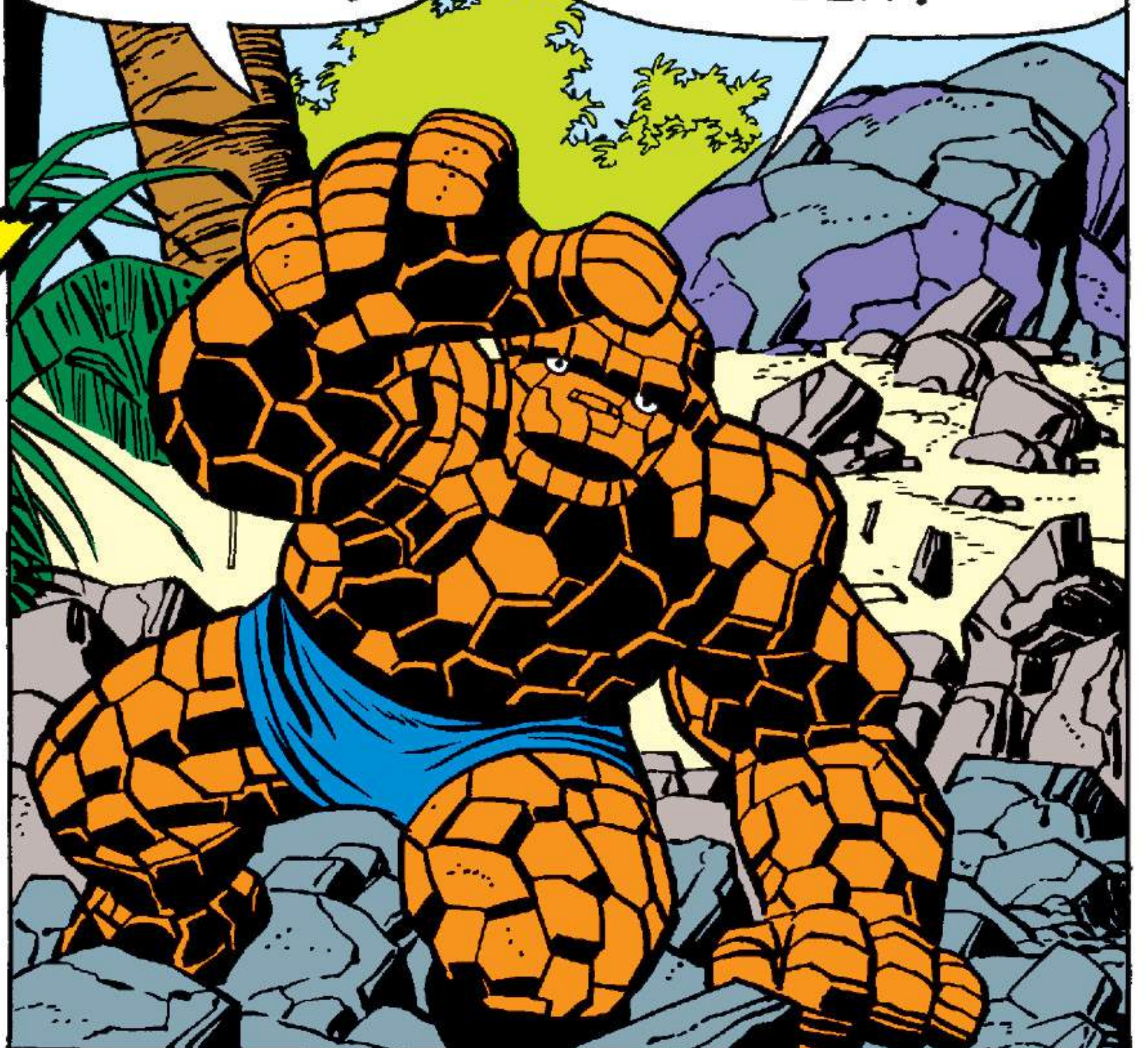


BUT, NO SOONER DOES THE MOUNTAINOUS BOULDER STRIKE THE CHARGING BEAST, THAN IT CRUMBLES INTO A THOUSAND SMALLER FRAGMENTS, RICOCHETTING BACK AT THE DUMBOUNDED HUMAN POWERHOUSE--!



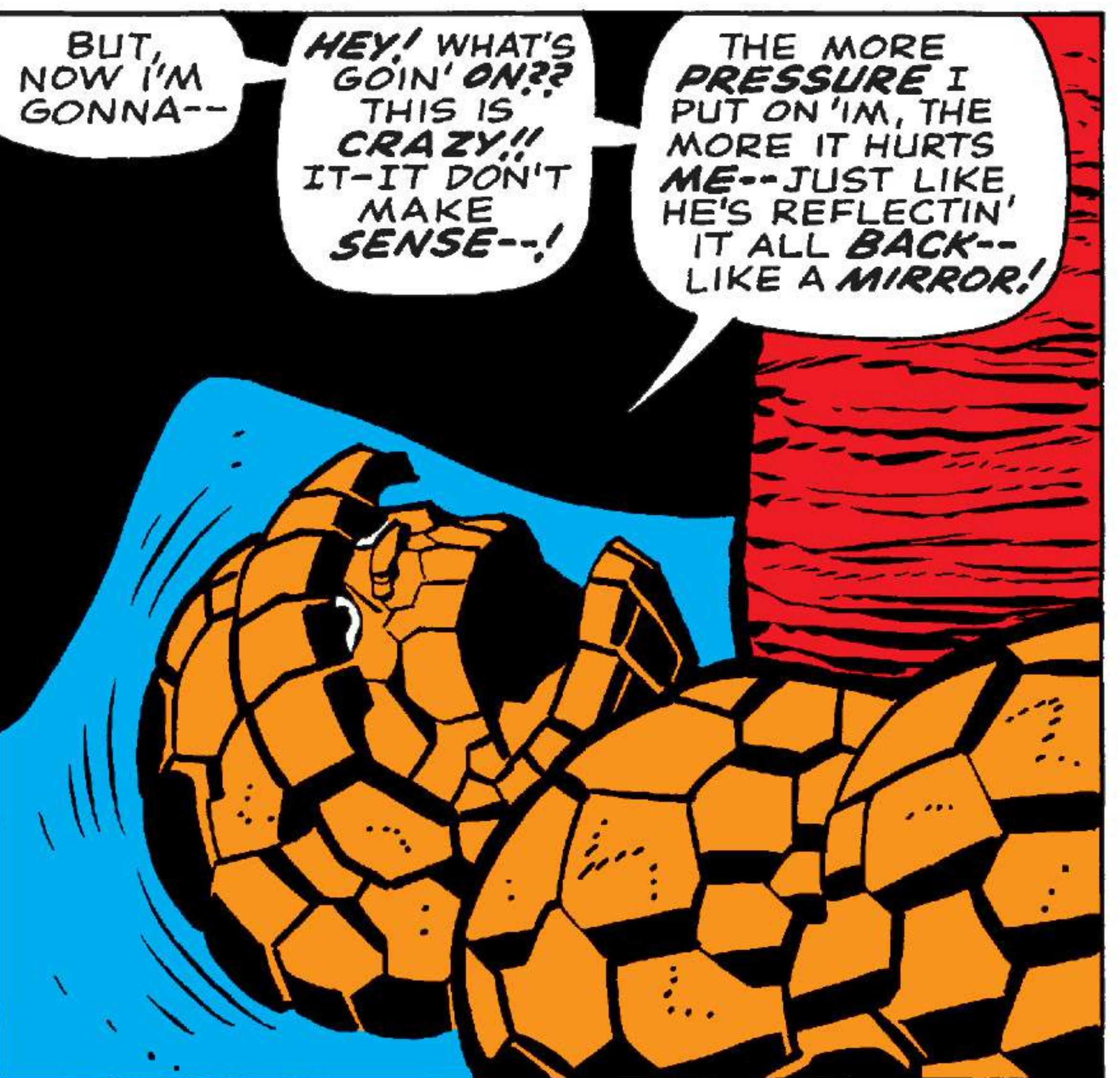
IF THERE'S ONE THING THAT REALLY BUGS ME, IT'S A WISE-GUY ELEPHANT!

IT'S THE ONES LIKE YOU THAT MAKE A JOKE OUTTA "BE KIND TO DUMB ANIMALS WEEK"!



BUT, I GOT NEWS FOR YA, BIG BOY! YA MADE ONE REAL BAD MISTAKE--

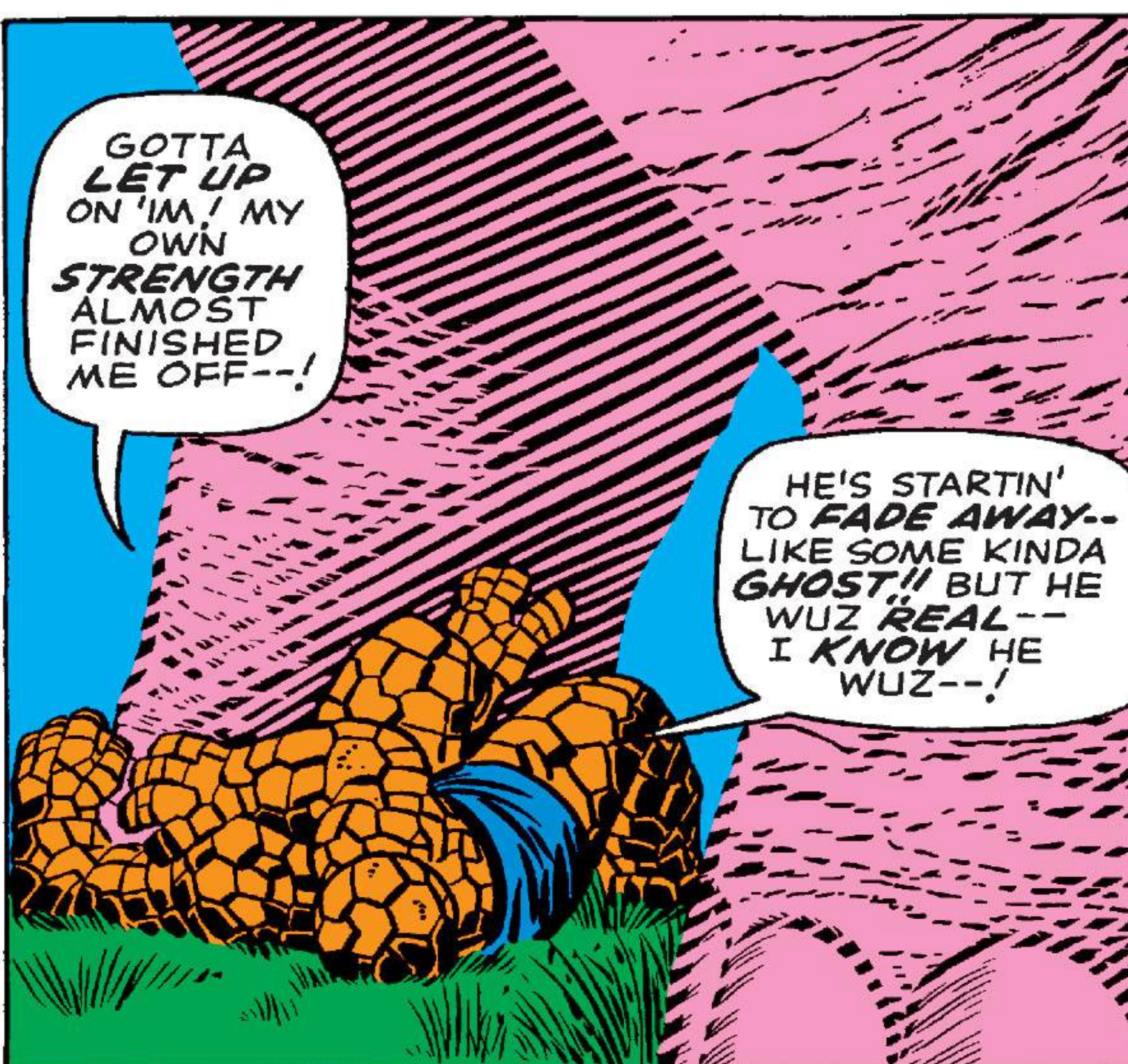
JUST BECAUSE I GOT A SWEET, INNERCENT, BLUE-EYED FACE, YA THOUGHT BASHFUL BENJAMIN WOULD BE A PUSHOVER--!



BUT, NOW I'M GONNA--

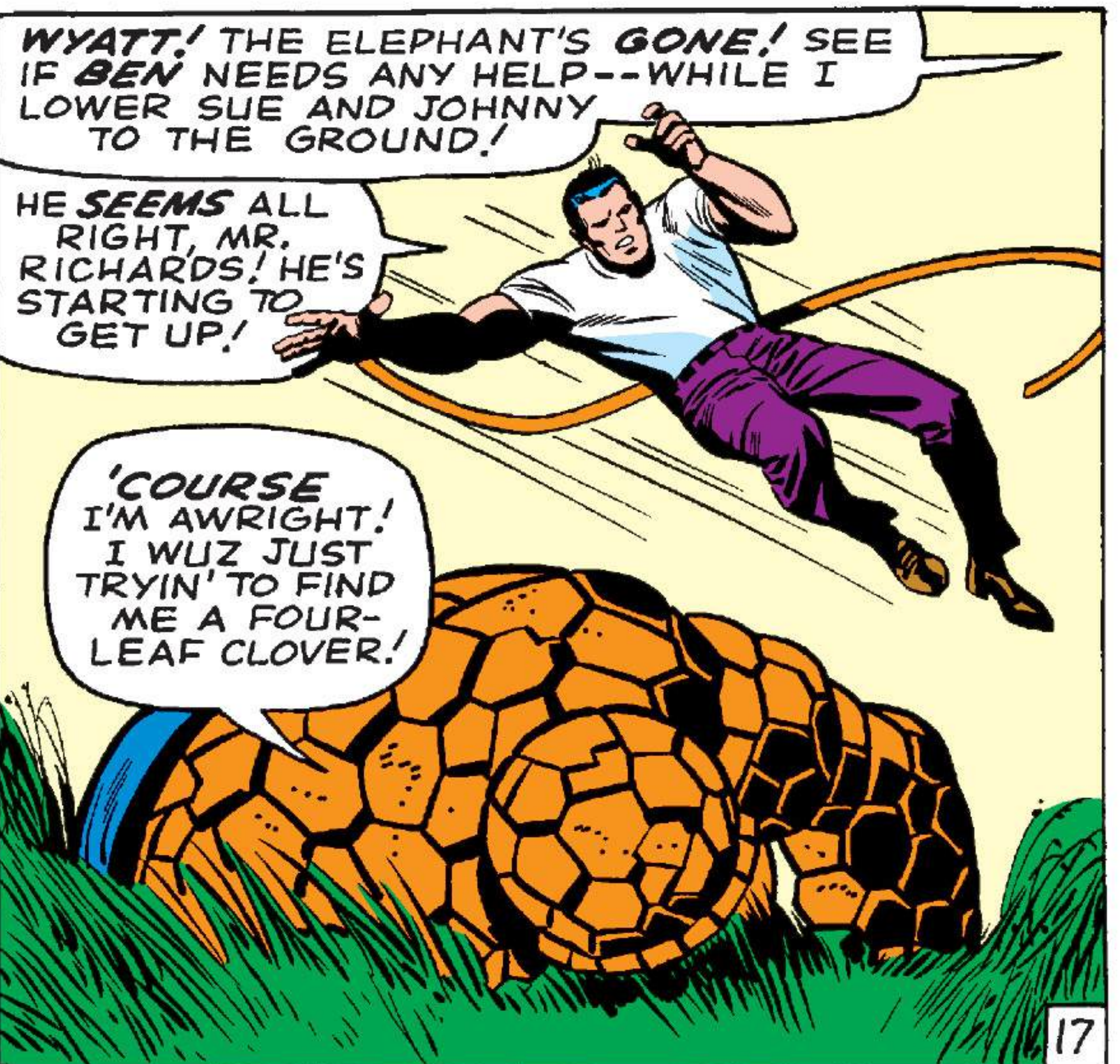
HEY! WHAT'S GOIN' ON?? THIS IS CRAZY!! IT-IT DON'T MAKE SENSE--!

THE MORE PRESSURE I PUT ON 'IM, THE MORE IT HURTS ME--JUST LIKE HE'S REFLECTIN' IT ALL BACK--LIKE A MIRROR!



GOTTA LET UP ON 'IM! MY OWN STRENGTH ALMOST FINISHED ME OFF--!

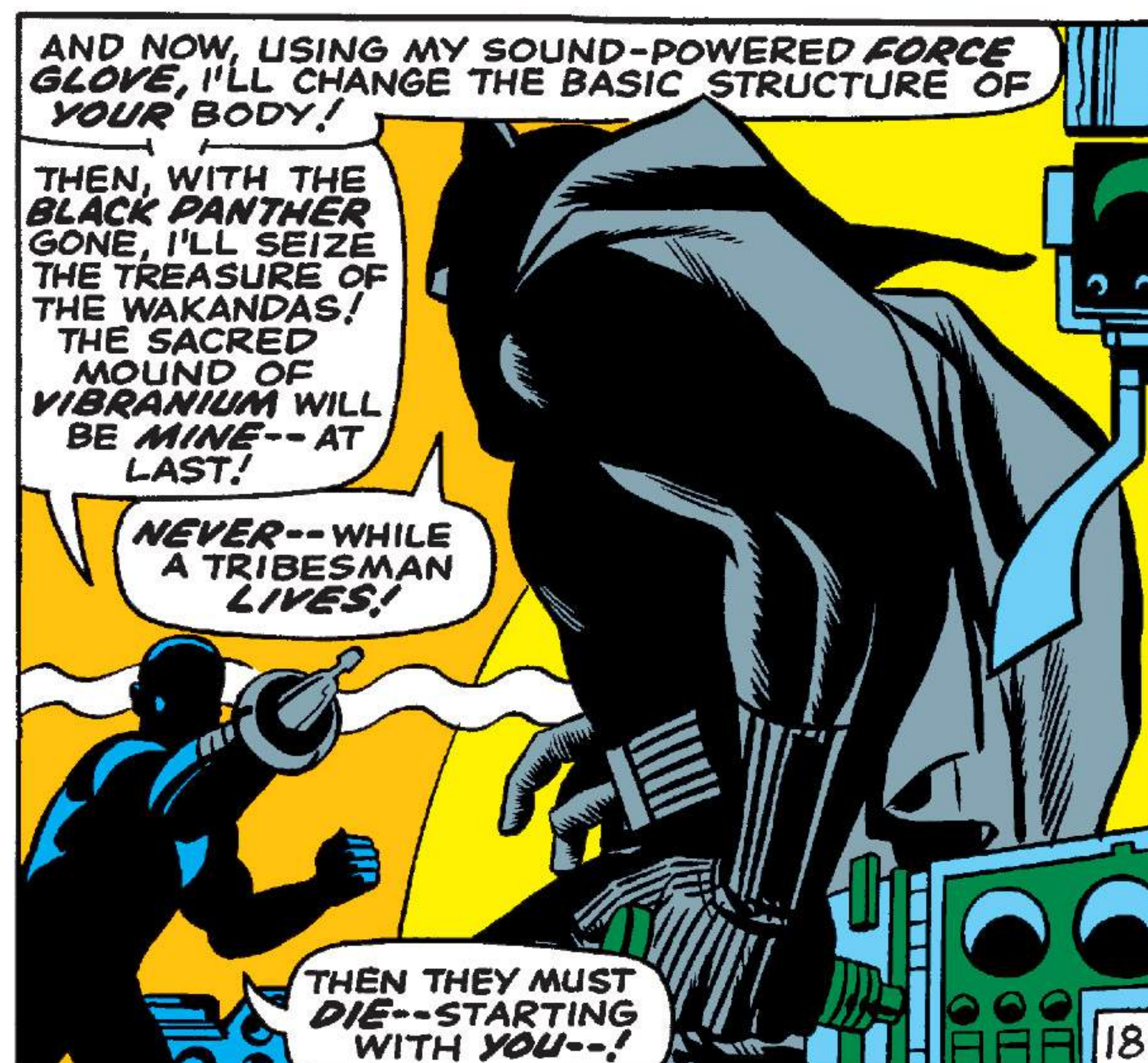
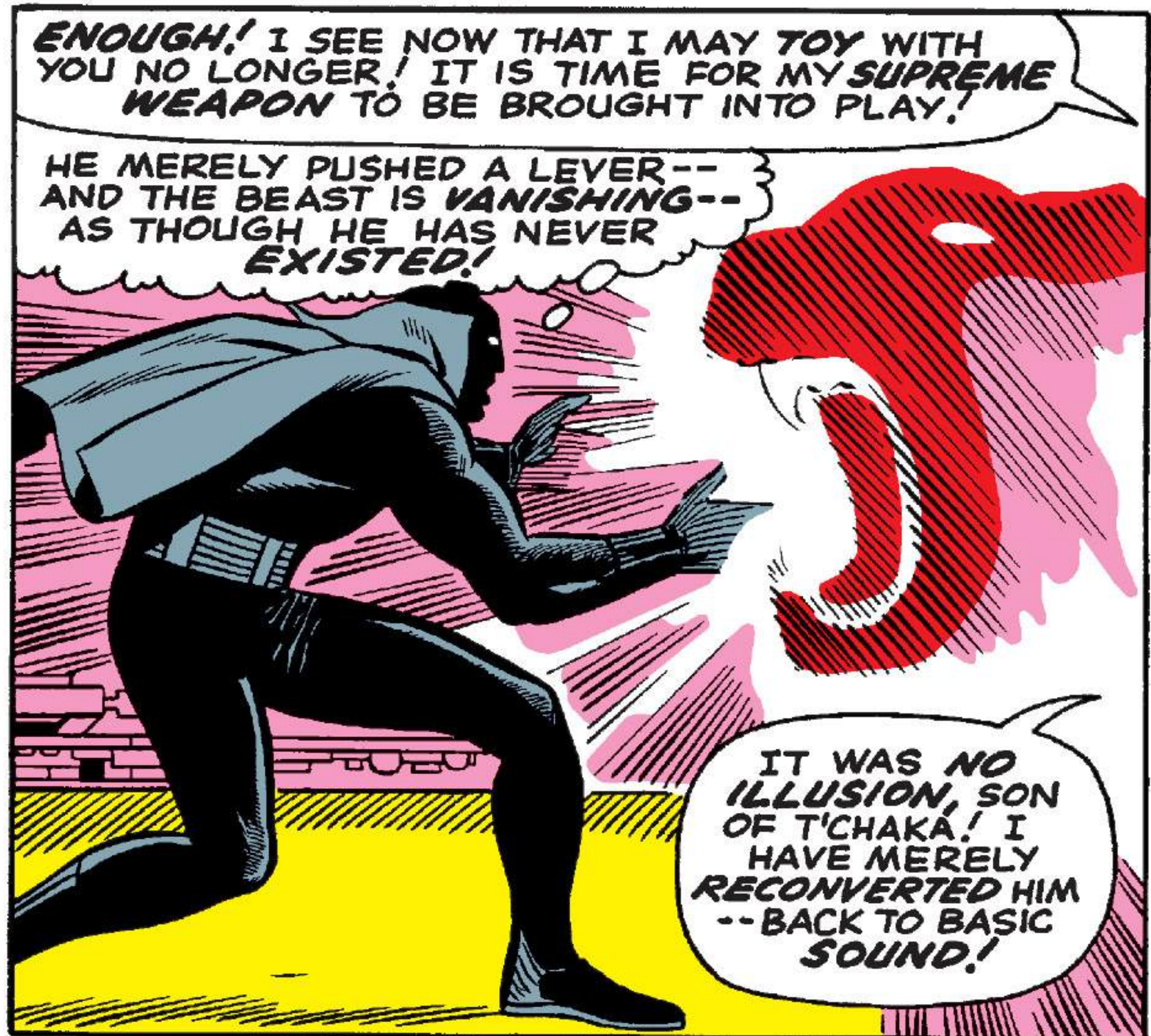
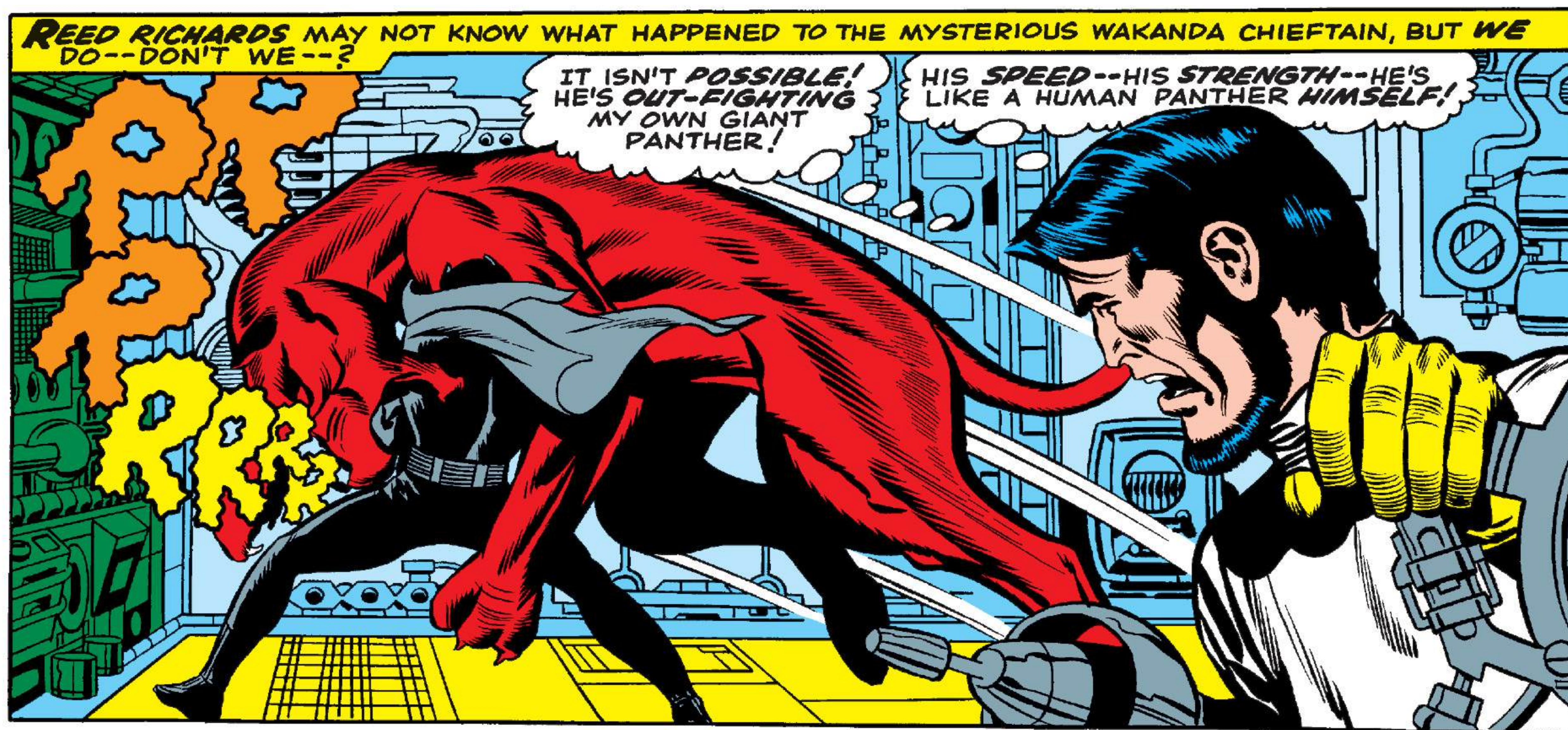
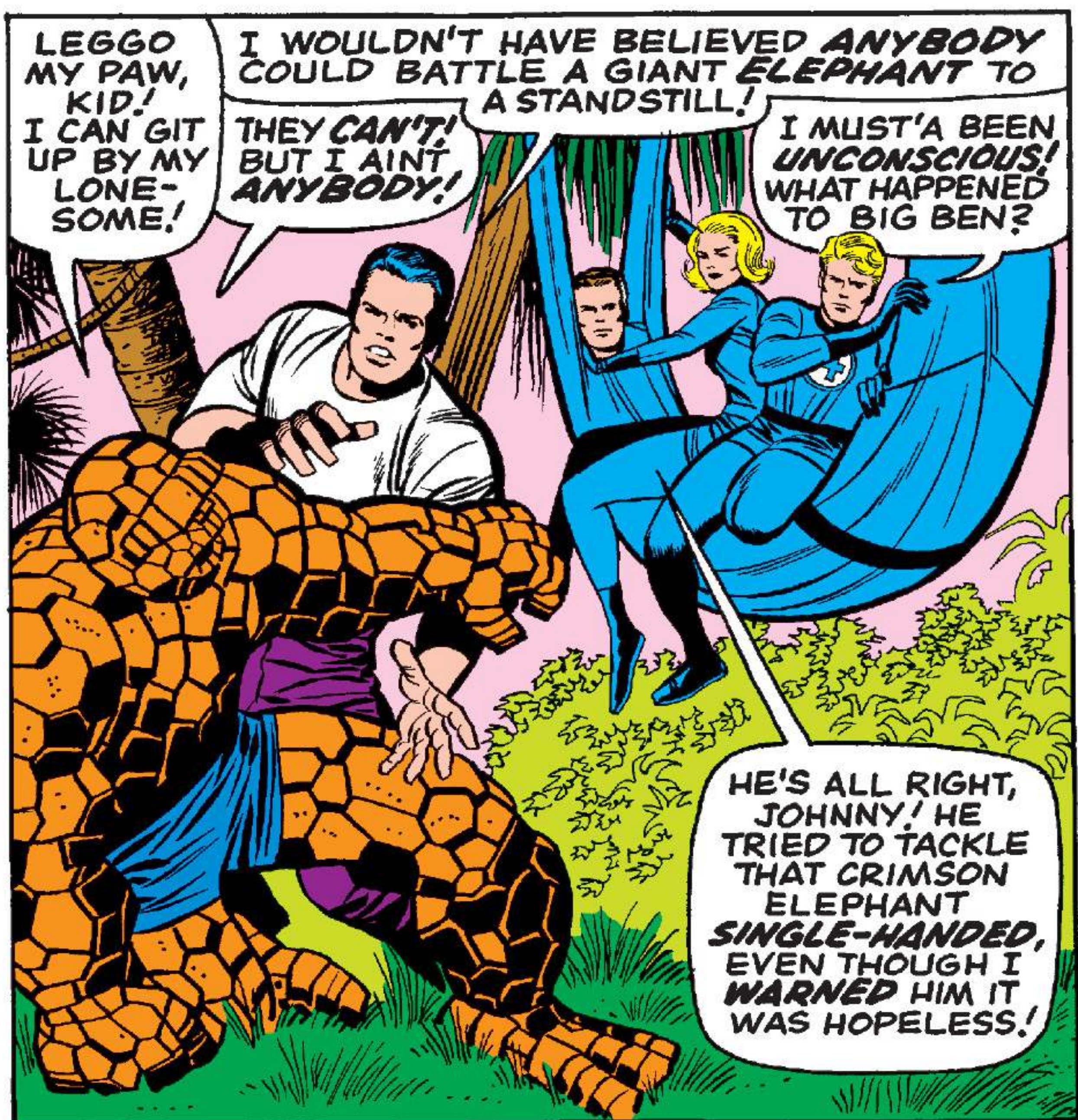
HE'S STARTIN' TO FADE AWAY-- LIKE SOME KINDA GHOST!! BUT HE WUZ REAL-- I KNOW HE WUZ--!

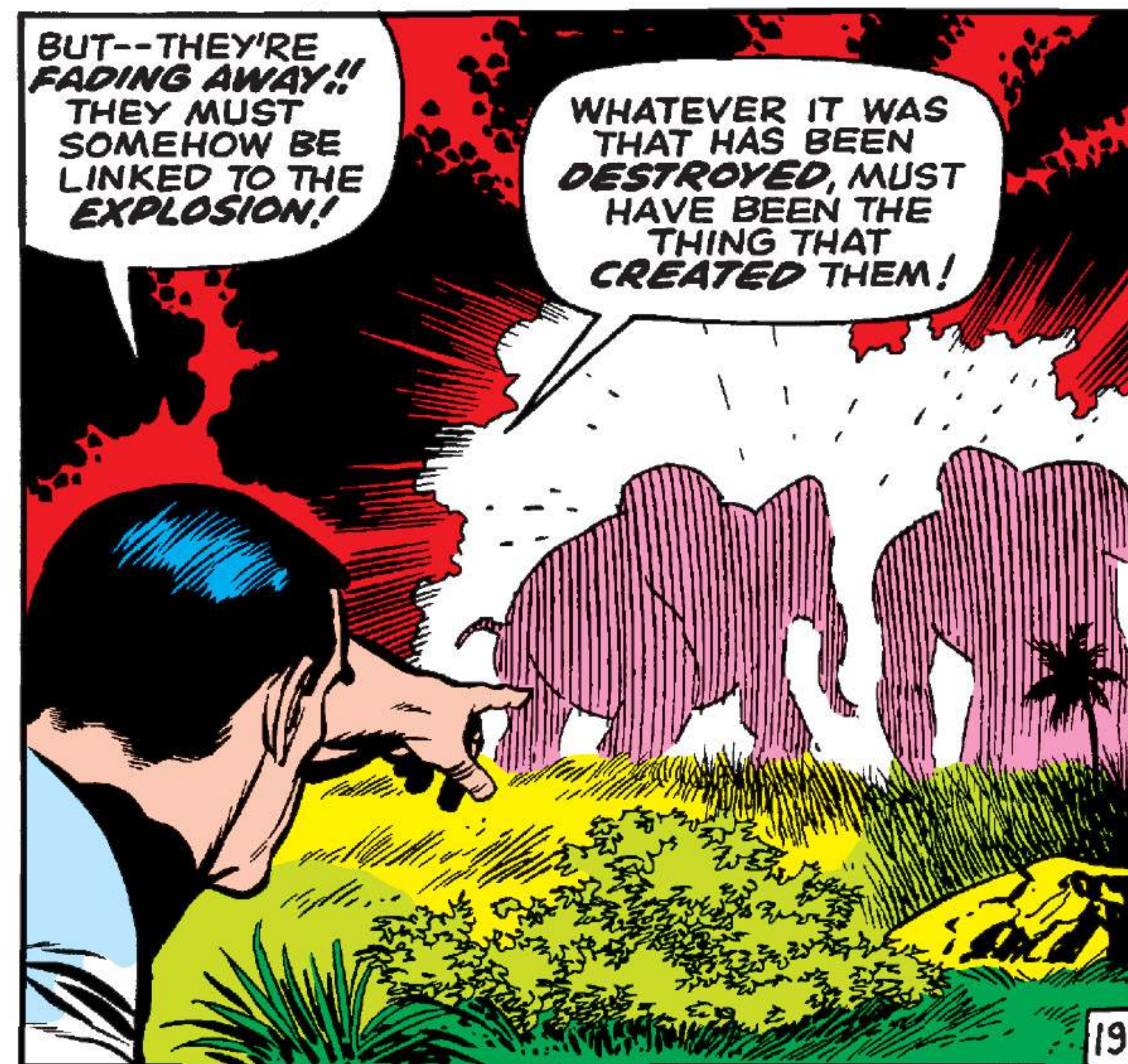
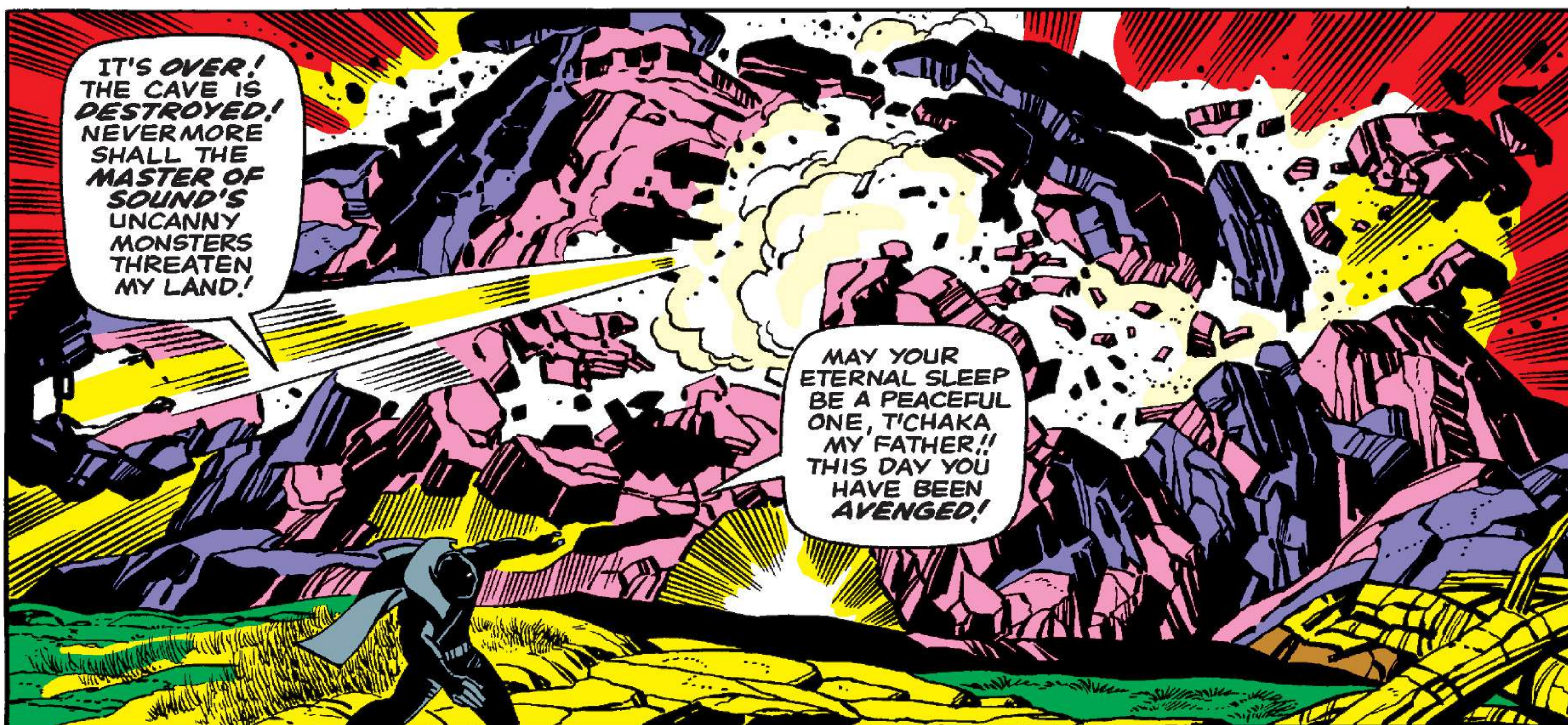
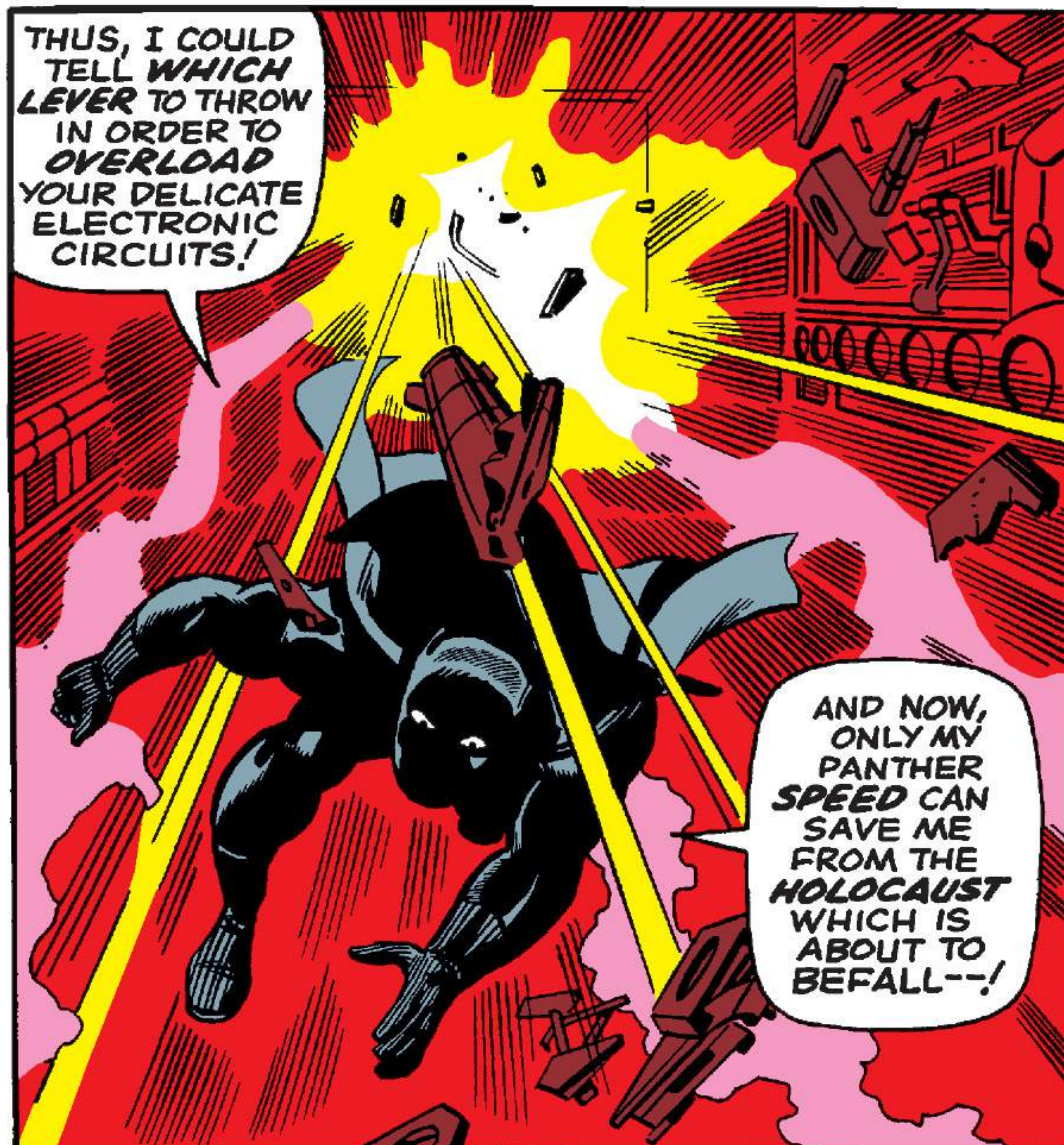


WYATT! THE ELEPHANT'S GONE! SEE IF BEN NEEDS ANY HELP--WHILE I LOWER SUE AND JOHNNY TO THE GROUND!

HE SEEMS ALL RIGHT, MR. RICHARDS! HE'S STARTING TO GET UP!

'COURSE I'M AWRIGHT! I WUZ JUST TRYIN' TO FIND ME A FOUR-LEAF CLOVER!





IT WAS **KLAW** WHO CREATED THEM--**KLAW**, WHO, IN HIS MADNESS, LEARNED THE INCREDIBLE SECRET OF TRANSFORMING **SOUND** INTO **MASS**!

BUT, I DESTROYED HIS ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT! IT WOULD TAKE HIM A **LIFETIME** TO REPLACE IT--IF HE **SURVIVED**!

SO THAT'S WHY THEM NUTTY ANIMALS FADED AWAY!

THEN YOUR MISSION IS **ENDED**!

YES--THE **MASTER OF SOUND** HAS BEEN DEFEATED!

BUT, SOMEHOW, I CANNOT BELIEVE IT IS OVER! I CANNOT BELIEVE THAT THE **BLACK PANTHER** WILL STALK NO MORE!

DON'T GIT ALL SHOOK UP, PAL! MEBBE THE **YANCY STREET GANG** CAN USE YA!

BENJAMIN J. GRIMM! THAT WASN'T FUNNY!

WELL, YA CAN'T WIN EM ALL!

THERE'S NO REASON FOR THE **BLACK PANTHER'S** CAREER TO COME TO AN END! THE WORLD WILL **ALWAYS** HAVE NEED OF A DEDICATED, POWERFUL FIGHTER AGAINST INJUSTICE!

REED'S RIGHT, FELLA! THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING TODAY, YOU NEVER HEAR OF A SUPER-HERO BEING OUT OF WORK!

I SHALL **DO IT**! I PLEDGE MY **FORTUNE**, MY **POWERS**--MY VERY **LIFE**--TO THE SERVICE OF ALL MANKIND!

ANYWAY, WITH A COSTUME LIKE THAT, YA CAN ALWAYS BECOME A **RASSLER**, OR A NEW KINDA **FOLK SINGER**!

BUT, EVEN AS THE GALLANT **BLACK PANTHER** DEDICATES HIMSELF TO AIDING HUMANITY; AMIDST THE CARNAGE AND RUBBLE OF THE SHATTERED HILLOCK, **ANOTHER** TYPE OF DEDICATION IS ABOUT TO BE MADE--

MY LIFE'S WORK--SHATTERED--**RUINED**--ALL BECAUSE OF T'CHAKA'S SON AGAIN!

BUT, BY SOME STRANGE QUIRK OF FATE --THE **MASTER OF SOUND** STILL LIVES!

AND, MY **CONVERTER** STILL POSSESSES A GLIMMER OF ENERGY--PERHAPS ENOUGH FOR **ONE** FINAL TRANSFORMATION!!

THERE IS **ONE** EXPERIMENT I NEVER DARED TO MAKE--ONE **CHALLENGE** I NEVER DARED ACCEPT!

I NEVER LEARNED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF--A **HUMAN** ALTERED HIS OWN BASIC STRUCTURE VIA MY **SOUND TRANSFORMER**!!

IF I **SURVIVE**, I'LL EMERGE WITH POWERS FAR **DIFFERENT** THAN THOSE EVER POSSESSED BY MORTAL MAN--!

POWERS ENOUGH TO ENABLE ME TO **DESTROY** THE ACCURSED **BLACK PANTHER**--

--AND, AFTER **HIM**--ANYONE ELSE I SO CHOOSE!

IT IS NOT UNLIKELY THAT WE SHALL MEET THE **BLACK PANTHER** AND HIS ARCH-FOE, **KLAW**, ONCE AGAIN--BUT, TILL WE DO, DON'T MISS THE START OF A BRAND-NEW STORY LINE NEXT ISH! YOU KNOW HOW IT **UPSETS** US WHEN YOU'RE NOT IN AT THE **BEGINNING**!

WHO'S THE WISE-GUY THAT'S HOLDIN' OUT?

THE M.M.M.S. STILL WANTS YOU!

Make out check or money order for \$1.00 to:

Hi Gang! Let's face it, I'm a Marvel Mad-man too! Here's my hard earned buck! Rush all your nutty gizmos to...

M.M.M.S. MARVEL COMICS GROUP
625 MADISON AVE., NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022

School,
College or
Occupation:

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____
ZIP _____ AGE _____

Fantastic Four 4 Fan Page

Send letters to LEE and KIRBY
THE MARVEL COMICS GROUP
SECOND FLOOR 625 MADISON AV.
NEW YORK 10022 N. Y.

Dear Stan and Jack,

I've just finished F.F. #49 and I must say, it was great!!! But one thing bothers me; if Galactus is really the star conqueror he claims to be, why does he have a big "G" on his chest plate? Is the English alphabet universal?

Dan Madaj, 21046 Cyman
Warren, Michigan

It is in Marveldom, Daniel! Anyway, with a name like Galactus, think how silly he'd have looked with a big "W" on his chest!

Dear Stan and Jack,

I must take back all I ever said about continuous stories. At first, I was afraid of your becoming too sparse on plot and art, but this has been proven completely false. Then I thought, "What if new readers pick up a copy of F.F. and stop reading it because they have been tossed right into the middle of the plot?" Well, after F.F. #49, I feel if they can't figure it out, it's because F.F. is too good for them. By the way, a very interesting part of your magazine is the letters page. To comment on letters, I myself have felt that Stan's great potential shouldn't be left in the comic book field, even if one of his great creations is "the World's Greatest." When is he going to start writing full-length science fiction novels? If Stan looked back over some of the weird things he has created in a few months, he might even scare himself. Remember: there's only one Stan Lee, but Irving Forbush can always carry on!! If Stan G. stops coloring the F.F., may the Punisher change the "World's Greatest" in your title to "New York's Greatest!" Now to the notice of greatest importance. The Fantastic Four have always fought greater and more evil villains in every issue. Now that you have almost reached the top in greatness, it will be easy to decline. If this climb in the F.F. is to go forward, you will have to face many dangers in the road of imagination. And till my stationery kit arrives I bid farewell and Fantastic Success.

Charles Hutler, 9 Sheridan Ave.
Kearny, New York

Never farewell, Charlie — merely "see ya around"! Anyway, why should Stan bother writing full-length sci-fi tomes when it's so much more fun paving the road to Marvel madness with our novel-length, full-color spectaculars? We're not gonna be satisfied until the book writers are clamoring to write comic mags — and that day may not be as far off as you think, C. B. — just wait'n see!

Dear Stan and Jack,

Because I am so kind, modest, supreme, and great, I have decided to save you from Mike Glicksohn's letter in F.F. #49. He says, among other things, that Black Bolt is impossible on three grounds. If any one of his three statements could be disproven, it would mean that Black Bolt is possible. One of those statements is that Black Bolt cannot absorb electrons as a source of power because the absorbed electron could only give him about one-half the power that it took him to absorb it. This is quite correct, except for something that no one thought of. Suppose Black Bolt has another source of power with which to absorb the electrons. Since he only gets back one-half of the

power that he puts in, his power is reduced by half. However, he is willing to make this sacrifice in order to exchange his other power source for a form of energy which he can use. If it seems impossible to use electricity to power a human being(?), we must all be dead! It just so happens that Brooklyn College sent a lecturer to my school. He said that if "eight candy bars could be oxidized at once, they would yield 1,018,000 amps." In other words, we run on electricity! So, if you are ever told that Black Bolt is incredible, you may answer, "Nay, he is supremely credible!" (With apologies to Silver Surfer!) Off with this science jazz. I wanna tell you that your mags are great, fab, gear, and good even. If they weren't I would never have searched, begged, and suffered to get whole collections of all your superhero mags, plus Sgt. Fury. The script of Stan Lee, the cover and art of Kirby and Sinnott, and even the lettering of Sammy Rosen made F.F. #49 a hit! So, as I eagerly await F.F. #50, I say hail Irving Forbush, hail Hydra, and make mine Marvel!

John Bonhomme, 429 Dumont Ave.
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11212

It's kinda hard to answer a letter when your eyes are filled with tears of gratitude, Johnny! To think that one faithful fan — one dauntless Marvelite, would go to such trouble — take such great pains — to prove that Black Bolt is more than a figment of our bullpen's imagination! The senses reel at such loyalty — such devotion to the cause of super-heroics — But, suffice it to say that King Kirby himself has nominated you to be the recipient of our oak-leaf cluster no-prize — and surely no greater homage can be paid a mere mortal — if such indeed you be! Or, in the immortal words of Honest Irving Forbush — "Wha'd he say? Wha'd?"

Dear Stan and Jack,

I'm never going to send any child of mine to Metro or Empire State Universities, because said institutions obviously accept only those students whose mental capacity does not exceed that of a cretin. Practical jokes, Stan? Petty feuds, infantile jealousies, and those heart-rending misunderstandings—in college, Leader? In a track 5 High School sophomore class, just maybe—but a college? Please, O shining gem of American storytellers, do not further malign Higher Learning! On bended knee, we implore you: have Jack erase the May panels in which the professors are giving each other hotfoots, and the Regents are wearing chicken-inspector badges.

Dennis O'Neil, 162 E. 2nd St.
New York, N.Y.

Okay, Denny — they're erased, expunged, and irrevocably eradicated! By the way, aren't you the same Denny O'Neil who's now one of Stan's bright young assistants? Did Rollickin' Roy Thomas put you up to that letter? Boy! If we don't keep our eyes on you two cut-ups every second — cheee!

Dear Stan and Jack,

What do the illustrator, the inker, and the colorer do? I thought I knew about the first two, but your answer to Kevin Morgan's letter in FF #49 threw me off. By the way,

I want to congratulate you on your art. That sequence where the Watcher sends Torch to Galactus' home galaxy is great, especially the third frame on page 15, where Torch appears in negative. Keep it up (as if you were going to stop!).

Mark Mandel, St. John's College
Annapolis, Md. 21444

Believe it or not, Mark, ol' Stan is answering your letter in a sunny hotel room in Palm Beach, Florida, where he's taking his first vacation in years! (Some vacation! Fabulous Flo and Jolly Solly send him all the mail and assorted mishmash every day!) So, unfortunately, he doesn't have the copy of F.F. #49 which you alluded to — but anyway, it may come as no shock to you to learn that the colorer — now hold onto your hat — the colorer is the pussycat who colors the pages! — And we wish all our frantic fans' queries were as easy to answer as yours was, tiger!

Dear Stan and Jack,

Woweee!! That was a pretty good write-up the N. Y. Herald-Tribune gave you in the January 9th Sunday edition. Also, I just finished reading FANTASTIC FOUR #49 . . . It was great, stupendous, superior, startlingly stunning, and as usual, it was good. There's one thing I wanna ask you, Stan . . . Do you *really* fill in the dialogue after the picture layout comes in? Hoo boy! But, as always, there must be a method to merry Marvel's madness. F.F. #49 was a cliffhanger, but how are you gonna conclude the whole thing in only one more ish (I hope)? The Silver Surfer is one of the most original characters I've seen. I heard that you have recalled quite a few characters from the bygone era, such as the Human Torch (who was supposed to be a synthetic man and was supposed to have a sidekick named Toro), the Sub-Mariner, who was originally drawn by Bill Everett, Captain America, and a couple of characters invented in 1943 or thereabouts. I read a fan's letter in ish #49 . . . MODEL KITS!!!! Why, that'll be the greatest thing since Stan learned how to type! If you answer this letter seriously, without one smart remark, I will send you a brand-new, stainless steel tax-deductible chrome-plated one-piece no-prize, super De Luxe model type. (Psst, Stan! It's a no-file for hacking through the bracelets that handcuff you to the typewriter!)

Guy Michel, 548 Riverside Drive
New York, N. Y.

Stan's not merely handcuffed to the typewriter, Guy! By now, he is the typewriter! Anyway, if you want serious answers (whatever they are), here goes — Yep, the dialogue is written after the pix are drawn! It makes it more confusing that way, and wreaks havoc on the artists' nerves — because they never know what their cavortin' characters will end up saying! Sure, we've revived characters from Marvel's golden age — and sure we're gonna soon flood the market with Aurora Model Kits of our hysterical heroes — just be sure you buy your share, fella — 'cause we'll be watchin' you! Remember, the eyes of Marvel are ever upon thee! (See? *Who* says this isn't the Marvel Age of Serious Letter Answers!)

Dear Stan and Jack,

I am pleased to announce that, with your forthcoming May issues of F.F. and SPIDEY, I have been reading and collecting these fine mags for one year. Therefore, I shall state all of the MARVELous changes in both mags (of occurrence in both periodicals) that truly set your brand of literature apart from all others: (1) The artwork itself is fantastic! Your soul-shattering titles such as "If This Be Doomsday!" and "The Final Chapter", to name a few. And, if that's not enough, you give us covers to match the titles. But inside the book, you supply us with full-page masterpieces and combination photo-drawings. Just one request, though—puh-lease try to publish more of your fab pin-ups. I'm sure many of your followers, myself included, missed them!! (2) The written content (yer stories!) is more than might be expected of mere mortals, or even people like you! Just about the greatest thing ever to happen to Marveldom is your continued classics!! Why do I call them the greatest? Mainly because, if you guys have a continued story, us guys receive more of Stan's great plots, more of King Kirby's fantastic artwork, more of some one's BRAAKKS!, WOKS!, and FOOFFS! But, most of all, we receive more nerve-shattering, senses-swimming, eye-catching, mind-wracking suspense! (3) The M.M.M.S.,

of course, speaks for its beautiful self; so I needn't bend your ear about it. So, as you can plainly see . . . it's been a very good year!!!! Paul Kalenak, 3543 Vineland Ave.
Astabula 4, Ohio

And it's been a dandy few minutes for us as we read your liltin' letter, Paul — many thanks.

Dear Stan and Jack,

What have you done to the Watcher? In FANTASTIC FOUR #48 and 49, if I were to judge by your illustration, he'd better cease watching and start doing and dieting. He is positively pudgy. Actually, my son and I are Marvel maniacs from 'way back. He agrees with Johnny that Crystal is extra special. (I thought she resembled Jean of the X-Men.) And Sub-Mariner is an old favorite of mine from the 40's. Don't know how you dream up the plots, but I enjoy all your stories very much!! Incidentally, please add my name to the skillions who are waiting for Reed to find a way for Ben to switch to the Thing when necessary and back to Ben when danger is over. Although, the way your stories have been going, he still wouldn't be Ben too often. As you no doubt have guessed, I enjoy your endeavors very much!

Mrs. Sarah Doll, 539 Silver St.
Manchester, N.H.

And, as you no doubt have guessed, we enjoy the priceless privilege of having fabulous fans like you, Mrs. D.! But, enough small talk. Since you mentioned it, we've got to get busy and put the Watcher on a diet — that is, as soon as we learn to pronounce the names of the extraterrestrial foods he eats!

Dear Stan and Jack,

F.F. #49 was a great story and the villains were even greater, but don't let Alicia fall for the Silver Surfer. By the way, where did the Surfer learn to surf à la Waikiki Beach? I'd like to see the Thing, Hulk, Sub-Mariner and Spider-Man team up to fight some aliens or some super powered villain. Oh yeah, how come sometimes, the Watcher is about four feet tall, and the other times he's a giant? Is it because he can change his size or are you guys making boo-boos again?

Bill Duff, 507 East Main St.
Bellevue, Ohio 44811

Thanks for giving us an out, Billy! Now all we have to say is — sure, he can change his size! (Unless we wanna tell the truth! Then, we've gotta own up to the fact that none of us can ever remember how big that sheet-wearin' swinger is supposed to be!)

Dear Stan and Jack,

Wah-hoo!! Only seconds ago I was speaking to the editor of *Existential Psychiatry* Magazine and director of the American Ontoanalytic Association; and he said that, if it were possible, he would like to publish the line from F.F. ANNUAL #3 ("The Impossible Man") which reads, "Name? We Poppupians have no names—we know who we are!" Imagine! Marvel quoted in a highly-respected national psychiatry magazine! 25,000 copies distributed nationwide to the elite upper crust of America!! \$#"%&#*! Pardon me, I'm getting so excited that I'm beginning to become incoherent! I told him that he just had to let me write you, so here it is. My one worry is: Do you think his mag is classy enough to have a quote from Marvel?

Scott Palmer, *Journal of the*
American Ontoanalytic Association
300 No. State St., Suite 5908
Chicago, Ill. 60610

As far as we're concerned, Scotty boy, no mag is! But, if we haveta be quoted by somebody, it might as well be an *Existential Psychiatry* pub — whatever that means! (Actually, although we're trying to sound blasé, we're really kinda thrilled! We just hope that what they wanna do is quote us — and not analyze us!)

NEXT ISH: By popular demand! (This guy we know, named Sam Popular, demanded it!) The Human Torch heads for the land of the Inhumans, to free the girl named Crystal! But, on the way, he encounters — aww no! It's too good to tell now! But, we can tell you that the F.F. sort-of go it alone for a while, in one of the most pulse-pounding, provocative, pace-setting thrillers of the season! So, if you can spare the time, why not join them? It might just turn out to be one of the most exciting experiences of your life!

"REGINALD HUDLIN HAS TAKEN THE FIRST BLACK SUPER HERO TO THE MOUNTAINTOP, WHERE HE BELONGS."

— Charles Johnson, author of the National Book Award-winning novel *Middle Passage*

"IT'S SO GREAT TO HAVE AN AFRICAN SUPER HERO. BLACK PANTHER HAS POTENTIAL TO AFFECT PEOPLE IN THE REAL WORLD." — Ziggy Marley

Deep in the heart of Africa is Wakanda, a technologically advanced civilization of great power and mystery. During the last ten centuries, Wakanda has stood alone as an unconquerable land inhabited by undefeatable warriors. Governing this nation is a lineage of warrior-kings possessing enhanced speed, strength and agility. Today, T'Challa is the latest in this famed family line, the great hero known worldwide as the Black Panther. Now, outsiders are once more assembling to invade Wakanda and plunder its riches. Leading this brutal assault is Klaw, a deadly assassin with the blood of T'Challa's murdered father on his hands, who brings with him a powerful army of super-powered mercenaries. Even with Wakanda's might and his own superhuman skills, can the Black Panther prevail against such a massive invading force?

Hollywood heavyweight **Reginald Hudlin** (*House Party*, *Boomerang*) and fan-favorite artist **John Romita Jr.** (*Captain America*, *Amazing Spider-Man*) team up to deliver a taut, politically charged thriller that *Ain't It Cool News* has lauded as "better than watching a really great hour-long television drama."

"FINALLY, MY FAVORITE SUPER HERO."

— Ice Cube



T+

MARVEL

Collecting *Black Panther* (2005) #1-6,
plus T'Challa's historic first appearances
from *Fantastic Four* (1961) #52-53.

Who Is The Black Panther? Black Panther <https://www.comixology.com/Black-Panther/digital-comic/21170>
Collects Black Panther (2005) #1-6. Deep in the heart of Africa is Wakanda, a technologically advanced civilization of great power and mystery. It's warrior-king is T'Challa, the latest in a famed family line, and the great hero known worldwide as the Black Panther. Despite the futile defeats of the past, outsiders are once more assembling to invade Wakanda and plunder its riches. Leading this brutal assault is Klaw, a deadly assassin with the blood of T'Challa's murdered father on his hands. Klaw brings with him a powerful army of super-powered mercenaries, all hell-bent on raining death and destruction on this pristine land. Even with Wakanda's might and his own superhuman skills, can the Black Panther prevail against such a massive invading force? Scraped metadata from Comixology [CMXDB21170], [RELDATE:2009-05-20] Marvel Superhero 197 en Kileko-Empire 2009 7 Reginald Hudlin John Romita Jr.